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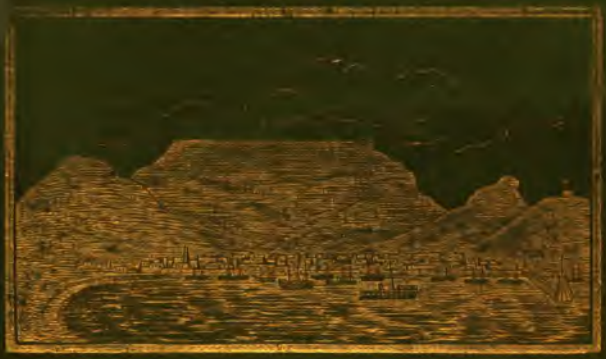
THE CAPE AS I FOUND IT



BEATRICE M. HICKS

1. Cape of Good Hope — Descr. & Trav.

2. Boers

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Hicks

THE CAPE AS I FOUND IT

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THE CAPE AS I FOUND IT

BY

BEATRICE M. HICKS

Feb.

1901

LONDON

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CHAPTER I

ON THE SEA

IT was before the war that I was living in South Africa, but I doubt if the country is, or ever will be, different to what I knew it. It is a large, wide tract of land, with few people there, and things change very, very slowly. Climate, race, and custom have made the place what it is, and it will not be altered in a day or so, however great the schemes for the future may be; but, all the same, there are many men who will rush out 'when affairs are settled' for better—or maybe for worse—and there will be going a crowd of women also, I hope, both for their own sake and that of the surplus females in England—and it is for them chiefly that I am recalling these reminiscences of South Africa, hoping that these may be of some use and entertainment to them, in showing what the country was like to me, and how I got on there.

I was still quite a girl when I made up my mind to go abroad, and so, after some deliberation, started off for the Cape. As I had no relatives out there, and knew scarcely a soul, all my acquaintances were interested in my departure, and found different reasons for my going. Some said I went to make my fortune,

which, needless to say, I did not do—I never heard of a woman who did—so that was a failure; some other friends—and friends generally impute the loftiest motives to one—said I was going out there to try and get married: but I didn't do that either, so that was a failure too. The real reason, though, of my leaving was very prosaic. I had at that time to earn my living somehow. In England I sat in an office all day long, and knew if I sat there for years I should never get on any further or earn really enough to keep myself, so I thought it silly to go on sitting there at all, and decided to go out to the colonies, where, if I should not earn much money, I should at least see a different phase of life, and more of the world at the same time.

Through the kindly help of that most excellent institution, the Women's Emigration Society, I made my preparations for departure, took my money, which was very little, out of the Post-Office Savings Bank, and booked my passage to the Cape on board the *Athenian*. I had heard that there was a good opening for teachers, so a-teaching I intended to go. I think I had a fair knowledge of book-learning. I had been educated at the North London Collegiate School (Miss Buss), and held several certificates, which are supposed to be a correct gauge of the knowledge which has been packed into one; and, indeed, I found out that at the Cape my London Matriculation certificate stood me in good stead, and some people up-country thought me really clever.

A party from the society, teachers and hospital nurses, were going out under the charge of Sister

Henrietta, of Kimberley. These I joined, and so I set forth to see the world. I think I quite fancied myself a person out of a fairy tale, and, to keep up the illusion, perhaps I ought to say something about my parents and my family. As far as I can find out, my ancestors, as in the story, were poor and humble folk; but, unfortunately, they were never poor enough nor humble enough to be in any way interesting, so there is nothing more to tell about them. And as for adventures, I'm afraid I cannot boast of having had any all the time I was away, although I was on the look-out for them. I had no exciting experiences. I always got food to eat in the daytime, and a bed to sleep on at night, and these without any difficulty, so I was not even thrilled by the ordinary emotions of hunger and sleeplessness. In fact, looking back now, those three years in South Africa seem quite commonplace, but a commonplace which is bright and pleasant to think of, a life without rush and worry, where you get more money and have less work, and the days pass on quietly and smoothly. Of course, on leaving home you give up many things. Until you get out there, you do not know what a difference that three weeks' journey from London makes; but instead of the (perhaps overrated) advantages of England, you can go for miles and miles, on and on, over ground which no spade has ever turned; you can breathe air uncontaminated by the breath of millions, such air as you have never felt in all your life before; you can find a people whose hearts perhaps are nearer the surface than those in the Old Country.

There were nine of us in Sister Henrietta's party,

and although we were dissimilar in tastes and of different ages, we got on very well, and were quite happy together. We were all going out for the first time, and looked upon the future, like Alexander, only as a fresh world to conquer. We were very hopeful, and when we parted vowed to each other eternal friendships, and now, in spite of the eternal friendships, I have lost sight of them all. When I last heard, one, like myself, had come back to England, one was married at Kimberley, one was teaching at Maritzburg, another at Bloemfontein, two were nursing somewhere—I don't know where—and the other two were dead. Theirs were sad stories, and to them South Africa was a disappointment. And so we all went off different ways.

Of course, we all nine intended to keep diaries, and to put down faithfully what happened to us each day. I had made the same resolution many times before, but had always given it up at the end of a week, and now I am glad I gave it up this time too. There is no satisfaction in reading an old diary; it always gives one an untrue picture of life. One day we write, 'Grandfather died, aunt broken-hearted'; the next, 'Cook left, had dinner out'; and the next, 'Sales began; took Tommy to be fitted for some boots,' and so on for weeks and weeks. Grandfather, Cook, Tommy, all are the stars of their own day—but afterwards? It is only by looking backwards in our own mind that we can get the right focus of the past—what things are important, what not. Yes, it is best to trust to memory—but, all the same, before I go on, it is well for me to say that everything, such

as it is, that I write here is true so far as I know. Nowadays it is the fashion for people to write their experiences, and they generally garnish them up so well that, if you want to be even with them, you must lie to infinity. It is rather a tax on a person of slow imagination, so I think it is best for me to tell the truth.

Some years ago it took three weeks to get to Cape Town, and the cynics used to say that during the first week the passengers were suspicious of each other and cold; the second they got friendly, and sometimes very loving; but during the third they all got deadly tired of each other and longed for the end. But it only took us eighteen days to Cape Town, so we escaped most of the last week; at any rate, I don't remember feeling deadly hatred towards any of my fellow-passengers, and I enjoyed the voyage very much. It was all so fresh and so novel, being away on the sea by ourselves for days and days with no land in sight, and yet all the time living in a little world of our own—so much so that we sometimes even forgot the water was there!

The captain was nice, the officers were nice, most of the passengers were nice. The only nasty person was our stewardess, who rated us when we said we were ill and wanted to lie abed; she evidently thought, and perhaps rightly, that sympathy is the worst thing for sea-sickness. Happily, I soon escaped from her claws, and after the first two days was in robust health and grew tremendously fat; for we did nothing all day but eat, drink, and make merry. In fact, all the people belonging to the boat seemed to be there

either to amuse the passengers or to feed them. I suppose there was someone to look after the ship itself—there must have been, for we got to Cape Town all right, and beat a record or something as well.

People are always interesting to watch, and on board there are types of all sorts. After a few days the kindred spirits somehow gather together, arrange themselves in little cliques, and mutually gossip about the others.

I remember we had all kinds of spiritual pastors and masters with us—'sky-pilots' the captain called them, and superstitiously said they boded no good—beginning with the Bishop of Bloemfontein and ending with a party of Salvationists and a Kaffir clergyman in the hold. They all held different services on Sundays, and the Bishop made the men angry by having matins every morning in the saloon, just as they wanted to go through to bathe. He was very holy; but lately I met a man who told me that he had travelled in the same carriage with him to the opening of the Rhodesia Railway, and that the Bishop had drunk whisky-and-soda and told good tales. So since I knew him his lordship must have reformed or degenerated—I don't know which. Of course, it depends entirely on the way you look at Bishops and things.

The Salvationists were very good people, and took care of a stranger-man on board who was dying. He had consumption, and was being sent out too late; he was full of hope, but he died in the hospital directly after we got to Cape Town. A dreadful

fight was waged all the way between these Salvationists and the ship's doctor: according to regulations, he wanted to vaccinate them, and they objected on conscientious grounds. In the end they won the day—I don't know how they managed it—and when we landed they drove off victorious with a band in a break to the 'barracks.'

Then there were officers, too, going out to Wynburg or round to Durban; young men, bound up-country to Rhodesia; elderly men, who seemed to have the affairs of the nation on their minds, who kept themselves to themselves; people who were going out to the Rand to make their fortunes, others who had made their pile and had been home for a holiday; several brides with their respective bridegrooms, who were no earthly use for entertaining purposes, and who always selfishly took up the cosiest and most sheltered nooks on decks; then there was the South African cricket team coming back from home, and a whole host more.

For the people that liked it there was plenty of fun. We had sports, and got up theatricals, and had tea-parties, where everyone had to come armed with a rhyme. Once the team kindly condescended to play cricket against us with their left hands and broomsticks. Making allowances for friendly scoring, and with the help of some little boys, who played as ladies, I believe we won in the end. There were dances, too, and concerts, the latter being conspicuous by the absolute lack of any musical talent whatever.

But one night there was to be a concert on the

lower deck, got up by the sailors and the steerage passengers, and we were all eager to go. It was so much more appropriate, we thought, to hear real sailors sing real sea-songs on a real sea than to listen to a man in evening dress wrestling with 'Douglas Gordon' in the saloon: we could get him at home! So we went to the sailor-concert; at least, we looked down from above on to their entertainment, and from our position could watch the performers and the audience as well. Strange beings they were, some in the shadow, and some with the light falling upon them. We began all right; I believe everybody in the ship joined in singing 'The Old Folks at Home.' The result was not harmonious, but it was meant well. After that the entertainment steadily deteriorated, and at last, sad to relate, it grew so vulgar we were ashamed to stop and listen. Then we crept silently away. And these were real sailors and real sea-songs! We felt everything was illusion in this world.

But we soon got over the disappointment of the sailor-concert, because our theatricals were such a success. I was acting in a piece called 'Turn Him Out'; I've forgotten who we turned out, but I believe it was meant to be funny. I was a servant-girl, and had a sweetheart called Nobbs. It was unfortunate that Sister Henrietta took a great dislike to little Nobbs, because he looked really quite fascinating when he was properly dressed up for his part in a suit of corduroys and an old hat which he borrowed from the steerage passengers. It was in vain we told her that his uncle was Dean of Worcester (or Win-

chester, or Wynburg — I've forgotten which) : she would not alter her opinion of him. I think he had made a noise on Sunday.

We used to learn our parts in the mornings—it was always a lazy time then—and after eating a huge breakfast we would loll about until the bell rang and it was time to eat again. There was a library with lots of books, but somehow we could never settle to read them. Sometimes we would attempt to sketch, but as our limited talents did not allow us to draw people, there was a certain sameness in the one subject, the horizon line of the sea, and we soon got tired of that. When we felt energetic we would get our needlework and make gaudy little bags, which Sister Henrietta was going to fill with sweets and give to the Kaffirs at Christmas time. And then there was palmistry ; several of us were great at that, and it is a most excellent amusement on board ship and helps to pass the time very pleasantly, especially when the hot part comes and you want to sit still and try and get cool somehow. Under the awnings, with now and again a puff of air trying to get round the corner, and the sea with its sparkles and flashes giving a croony little noise, and with everyone lazing round and dozing away in the deck-chairs, then is the time for hands ! It is wonderful how far into the future you can see, and what strange things you can foretell !

We told everyone's fortune on board, I believe, though we knew very little about palmistry ; but that did not prevent us from distributing calamities, fortunes, deaths, marriages, wholesale, and I re-

member we declared to ourselves, to him, to everybody else, that Colonel Rhodes—he was going out by this same boat—had broken his heart for somebody at the age of thirty-five. We quite believed it, and used to watch him pacing up and down the deck in his gray clothes and his gray squash hat, and thought we knew the secrets of his heart. We little knew that, instead of a woman, he was thinking of the Uitlander people; that he, too, was going to have a finger in that pie which was taken out of the oven before it was baked, and made the world laugh! I always wish now we had looked a little more; it would have been such a triumph to have foretold the Jameson Raid by palmistry!

So the time went on, and a very nice time it was. For the most part we had a calm passage and lovely weather; we had some beautiful moonlight nights, too, when the moon seemed to make a bright silver path for us over the water and everything was as clear as daylight. Afterwards we had many such nights at the Cape, only it was on and on, over the veld, and not the sea, that the moon shone, but it gave one the same vast free and peaceful feelings. In London it seems, with all the noise and the people and the distractions, we can never take the trouble to look up; it is only in less fortunate places, without the gas and the electric light, that we have to consider the moon and turn to Nature again.

But talking of the moon makes one think of love; the one is supposed to be symbolical of the other, is it not? One always hears that love-making is the amusement *par excellence* on board ship, and we were

very disappointed that no romantic incidents happened during our voyage. There were no engagements, no broken hearts, and as soon as we had begun to summon up some enthusiasm over a couple, they began to get tired of each other and to attach themselves to other people. It was most trying, especially as the captain would come and tell us yarns by the hour together of the different episodes which had taken place during his time—about girls who were going out to be married and who got engaged to somebody else on the way, and of men who got engaged and were married to somebody else all the time, and of women who were married and of men who were not, and all sorts of permutations and commutations.

The captain was a very sentimental man, and often shook his head and sighed when he told these tales. He believed in True Love with capitals—but that is so easy for a sailor, who only sees his wife occasionally. He told us once that, though he had been married years, he always felt every time he came home as if he were on his honeymoon again. And when we laughed, he only said: 'You don't know what love is! Perhaps you will some day.'

But, still, he seemed to find life very comfortable all the same, in spite of romance. One tale he told me of a man who had just lost his wife and was broken-hearted. But coming out from home again, on this ship, he fell violently in love with a fellow-passenger, who apparently returned his affection. Things were straightway arranged, and the couple came to the captain and asked him to marry them

at sea. The captain regretted that such weddings were not now, as formerly, legal, and the disappointed pair had to wait until they reached Cape Town, where the wedding took place the next day and the captain was invited to the feast. Curiously enough, I afterwards met the happy couple in Grahamstown, and, so far as I could judge, they had not married in haste to repent at leisure. He was nice and she was pretty, and the first wife was as if she had never been.

On our way we stopped at Madeira, but, unfortunately, we had only two hours on the island. Only two hours, and I've always wished to go there again—though now, I remember, there were drawbacks even in that short time, especially beggars and smells and the absolute filth of the inhabitants.

Funchal is built round a bay on a hill, which starts up out of the water and goes up steep, with the little white houses dotted about on it, until it reaches the top, where a little white church stands out like a speck from among the trees. The great thing to do at Madeira, I believe, is, as soon as you land, to be dragged up the hill to this church, which takes a long while, and then, directly you get there, you toboggan down with a rush; then it is time to go on board again.

Two or three girls and myself decided not to go up there, but to stay down below and to explore the town. First we went to the English cemetery, to see the grave of somebody's friend's friend—I've forgotten whose—but we could not find it because of the flowers. It is the most beautiful cemetery I have

ever seen. It does not seem a graveyard, but a fairy garden spread by the side of the sea. The tropical plants and the palms were growing wildly, and the creepers had flung themselves over the graves and the gravestones—jessamine, roses, and many bright flowers whose names we did not know. I often thought of it all when I saw the graveyards at the Cape, where the ground is so hard and barren, and the graves are covered over with a pile of earth where not a blade of grass will grow—like Kaffir graves, they seem. There was a caretaker living in the cottage at the entrance. She had a dear little boy, who toddled round after us—a good sample of a Portuguese child, with his black hair and dark eyes. He ran about and picked flowers for us, and so armed, with our nosegays, we went on again to explore.

We had been rather pestered by the beggars before. Directly we landed we had been surrounded by crowds of these harpies, who thought to arouse our pity by waggling in front of us withered arms and footless stumps; but now they were ten times worse. The streets in the town are narrow and crooked, and the houses high, and after some wandering about we came to the sorry conclusion that we had lost ourselves. By this time we had collected a large number of beggars, and, not content with capering around us, they actually began to touch us and to pull our clothes, and no one understood our piteous cries, 'Can you tell us the way to the ship?'

At last deliverance came. We saw a gentleman walking along who looked quite white. He was fair, with a red beard, and wore a white suit and helmet.

I frantically dashed over to the other side of the road.

'Oh, please, are you English?' I asked breathlessly.

He stopped and lifted his hat.

'No,' he said, 'I'm Portuguese; but I speak English. Can I be of any assistance to you?'

'Oh yes, please!' I said. 'You see, we've lost ourselves, and we can't find out where we are, and these wretched people have been following us all the time, and we don't know what to do. Can you tell us the way back?'

'You come from the boat? Yes? Then you want to go to the quay?'

'Well, we've really been wanting to find the fruit-market. They say that's a thing we ought to see. But I don't know. I think we'd better go back on board ship. We shall be safe there from these creatures!'

'The fruit-market? Why, certainly! We can take that on our way. If you allow me, I will show you.'

We thanked him most effusively, especially as the beggars seemed to disappear as if by magic, and with light hearts we followed him to the fruit-market. Of course, we had been near it all the time! There we recognised several of our fellow-passengers bargaining and buying, and so, feeling ourselves in safe custody, we bade 'Good-bye' to our kindly guide. Certainly, there are Portuguese *and* Portuguese.

The fellow-passengers, who happened to be masculine, laughed at us in their superior way, and

graciously bought us immense quantities of fruit to console our feminine vanity, and then took us for a drive round the town, which was a much more pleasant way of seeing it. The carriages are like little four-post bedsteads, with a flat cover on the top and with curtains tied at all the four corners. They have no wheels, but run on sledges, so, drawn by oxen, you glide through the town over highly-polished cobble-stones. We ended up with a delightful tea in a shady corner of a hotel garden under the palm-trees, and so quite recovered from the attentions of the inhabitants.

It was almost dark when we got to the ship, and the sailors were hustling away the chair-sellers and the lace-people who had crowded on board, for we were going to start immediately. The sky in the west was almost dark, and, looking towards the land, we could no more distinguish the houses, and could only see the lights twinkling on the side of the cliff.

The *Athenian* was a mail-boat then, so after Madeira we did not stop again until we reached Cape Town. I was going on further up the coast to East London, but Sister Henrietta and most of the party, together with the majority of the passengers, were leaving the ship at the Cape, so there were grand packings-up, and leave-takings, and good-byes to be said. It was dark and late when we got into Table Bay, so not many people went away that night. We stood and watched the mail-bags taken off—a long, continuous stream. We thought it would never end.

We were all excitement to get up the next morning

to have our first look at South Africa. It is best to see Cape Town, to begin with, from the water, as we did. The whole place lies before one as in a picture. From the bay you can get a splendid view of the spreading town, with its white buildings, while rising sheer above everything is the dear old Table Mountain, with its flat top and tablecloth of mist, flanked on either side by the Lion's Rump and the Devil's Peak. This was South Africa, and we were not disappointed. The blue sky, the blue sea, the white buildings, and the rough mountains, gave one the impression of being in a foreign town, and that impression was increased when, on landing, we saw the wide, uneven streets, the quaint little hansoms—all named like boats, and painted in colours—the free-and-easy walk of the people (none seemed to be in a hurry), the long waggons and the long spans of oxen in them, the Cape carts, and, above all, the blacks. They struck me most. They seemed to be everywhere, jabbering away to each other in Cape Dutch. They all made the place so unlike England, and the country round about was so different too. We were delighted with the quantities of arum lilies—pig lilies, as the old colonists called them—growing wild along the ditches and in great patches in the damp meadows. We filled our hands with them, and in the evening threw them into the carriage to the others, who were going off that night to the hospital at Kimberley. There were a lot of us at the station to see the train off, and I felt quite sorry our pleasant party was breaking up, and that I had to say good-bye to the nurses, Sister Henrietta and all.

Sister Henrietta—I shall always think of her as being very kind and good to us all, for I am sure we must have been a trial to her at times, especially as she still had many good old-fashioned ideas about girls and what they should do and what they should not do. She looked after us physically, mentally, and morally, and I am sure we ought to have been very grateful to her. She was very particular about our morals especially. I remember one morning we were all reading or working on deck, when Colonel Rhodes came up with a book and offered to lend it to Sister Henrietta. It was George Moore's 'Esther Waters,' which was making some stir at that time, and was supposed to be rather improper. But Sister Henrietta had read the book, and he sat down, and they began to discuss it. At the end she said :

'You will be careful, please, not to let that book lie about. I should not like any of the girls in my charge to read it. It would not be proper for them to do so.'

'Oh yes, I understand—certainly,' said Colonel Rhodes.

As it turned out, I'm afraid most of us had read 'Esther Waters,' but that did not take away from the kindness of her good intentions, and, as I said, I was sorry not to see her again.

We were quite a little party left to go round the coast. The Bishop had gone, and his chaplain, the Salvation people and the rest; even the Kaffir clergyman had disappeared. The day before, we had seen a cab coming along the street, the roof and box groaning with trunks and packages, and there were

parcels sticking out on all sides. As it passed us, a little man threw himself half-way out of the window, waving his arms to us. We stood on the curb, too, and waved. That was the last of little Nobbs. The several brides and bridegrooms had for the most part driven away, after having fought with the Customs over the trousseaux; the cricketers went to report of their prowess in England.

And so they most of them went, and the rest of the way was dull. We even missed the people who had been uninteresting. Going round the coast was nasty, too, and rough, and we began to feel qualmy again, and thought the old sailors were right when they called this the Cape of Storms, and were frightened by the rocks and dangers of this south coast.

We stayed a day and a night at Port Elizabeth, where I went on shore, and the next morning we got to East London (auspicious name), where I was to land and take the train up to Queenstown.

And such a landing it was! There is no harbour in East London, and most of the ships are too big to cross the bar and go into the river. We lay tossing at anchor while a tug came from shore to fetch us, and then we had to be lowered in a basket. The luggage was let down by cranes, and I watched my chattels being deposited one by one in the boat. Then it was time to say good-bye, and I shook hands with everybody, and we all said pretty things to each other.

'No, I won't say good-bye,' said one man. 'What about your palmistry? what do your lines say?

You'll rove about the world, and I shall, too. We shall knock up against each other again. No fear! So long, as you'll hear the colonials say.'

Then I got into the basket, and I must own I didn't like the idea much. The door was shut, and through the hole at the top we could only see the sky and the ropes on the basket. For a moment we were suspended in mid-air; then the deck of the tug seemed to come up and hit us with a bang, and then we were landed safe and sound on board. The sea was heaving all around, and we were surrounded by gigantic waves, which had appeared quite little when we were on the big boat. In a few minutes we were off, with the water now and again splashing over us. Then a tremendous lurch as we bumped on the bar, and we got safely into the river.

Before we quite turned the corner, I looked round again at the *Athenian*. She seemed big—far bigger than she did when I was on board; but she was already far away in the distance, and I could not distinguish the people on deck. Dear old *Athenian!* Of course I vowed I would never go back to England by any other boat, but of course I did.

And in front of me was East London, and here was I, a stranger in a strange land. But I had not much time to think of that or to explore the place. It gave me the impression of little houses with tin roofs, a large market-place, and pretty public gardens. My train went in the evening to Queenstown, and off I went again, with all my worldly goods and chattels.

CHAPTER II

IN THE TRAIN

So far I had only been enjoying myself, because there was nothing else to do, and there was no use in thinking and planning; but now I had landed I had to consider the future and how I was going to earn my living. My friend to whom I went at Queenstown had kindly been arranging for me to go on to a farm near by, but previously, under Sister Henrietta's advice, I had sent my certificates to Grahamstown, hoping to obtain an appointment there as teacher at the Diocesan School for Girls, which is reckoned, I suppose, one of the most important schools in the colony. I was offered a temporary post for three months, with a chance of staying on longer if we suited each other, so accordingly, after a day or two's rest, I packed up my luggage again and started off for Grahamstown.

To anyone that knows the map of the Cape, it will be seen that I made quite an unnecessary round, and spent more money than I need have done on my railway fare. It would have been much quicker and much cheaper to have gone up to Grahamstown from Port Elizabeth; but I did not know in time, and I

did not at all regret the long journey. It was an excellent introduction to the colony, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

It takes about ten or twelve hours to get from East London to Queenstown, and then two whole days and a night more to get from Queenstown to Grahamstown, so I saw a good bit of the country. My experience of Cape trains is that they are very comfortable, and though they are slow they are sure. In most places there is only a single line, and the train sleepily crawls along. If it has to stop for an hour or two at a crossing for another train to pass, it doesn't seem to matter to anyone in the least; and then it draws up at a wayside station for meals in the most delightful fashion, and people get out and eat and stretch their legs for half an hour or more. The carriages are quite cosy, with berths that let down, and at night you can go to bed just as if you were at home, and in the corridor trains there are tables, where you can sit and amuse yourself during the day.

The railways at the Cape are under Government control, so there is no competition, which may account for the self-satisfied way in which the trains meander along. State control may be a beautiful thing in theory, but competition, after all, is the thing for practice, and it makes engines go. There are three classes on the railway out there. The third is for the natives, and they sit in a sort of superior cattle-box, which, of course, no white person will deign to enter. It is proper and right to go first class, and almost everybody does so. I often went second

because it was cheaper, but it wasn't correct; in fact, I don't know if it was considered very correct for a girl to travel alone at all, for several people asked me if I minded going about by myself; but, as a matter of fact, I often knew of someone else going for the holidays, and we would travel together.

'I always like to come with you,' said a girl to me once. 'You seem to know what to do, and never get nervous. I feel just as if I were travelling with a man.' And she meant it as a compliment!

But it is not for us teachers to talk against the railways at the Cape. Government does its best to encourage education, and so all teachers and scholars travel at half-price during the holidays, a thing greatly to be appreciated where the journeys are so long, and a ticket to anywhere seems to cost three or four pounds.

When I left East London it was night, so I wrapped myself up and went sound asleep, though I still had the sensation of being on the sea, and could feel the waves heaving up and down around me. The next thing was a bang at the door, and an ugly black head, with a huge mouth, white teeth, and snub nose, was shoved in.

'Coffee, missus?'

Then I sat up and rubbed my eyes and looked out. It was sunrise, and we had halted at a siding. A platform, fairly long, a shed with a tin roof, and a small clump of blue-gum-trees—that was the railway station; and beyond was the veld, on which all the brightness of the morning was shining.

The veld! One always hears of that in England, and wonders what it is, and we, with our tidy country and our fields, primly set out like an old maid's parlour, cannot imagine it. Just the land as God left it—wide-spreading; on and on it goes, like the sea, only bounded by the horizon in the distance. Here and there men have tried to steal enough from it to make their mealie lands, or even enough sometimes to build a town, but all that is merely a drop from the ocean—the veld laughs at them still. This wild land, which stretches all over South Africa, must indeed have seemed like a vast ocean to those first Dutch settlers, who gave it its name while they trekked over it in their waggons, as they had sailed in their slow ships over the sea. Sometimes with one face, and sometimes with another, still the veld is always the same. Nearer the sea it is covered with bush, in some parts so large and dense that men lose themselves even now, and wander about for days. Then there is the scanty, coarse grass and the mountains, and again the miles and miles of country where only the wee little karoo bushes grow. It was like this — the veld — long before the white man came, long before the black tribes came, who know it now; long before the little Bushmen hunted there; long ago, farther back than we can even think of. It has been there always, changing yet changeless, on and on the same. I often think it could tell many Nature stories to us who live tied up together in big cities. Perhaps one day there will come a poet who will sing the unsung stories of the veld. But stay, I am forgetting! There was one—Thomas

Pringle—who came out with the Albany settlers in 1820. Although he soon returned to his native land of Scotland, his heart went out to the new colony in South Africa. The wildness and the vastness of the country appealed to him. We find him writing:

> 'As I sit apart by the desert stone,
> Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,
> A still, small voice comes through the wild
> (Like a father consoling his fretful child),
> Which banishes bitterness, wrath and fear,
> Saying: "Man is distant, but God is near."'

Curiously enough, at first the veld strikes one with a feeling of desolateness, and then of monotony: it is only after one has lived there that one learns its fascination and its engrossing interest.

Well, I sat up and drank my coffee. There was the veld, and I quite own that at first I was greatly disappointed. I had expected to see stretches of waving grass, beautifully green, like the marshes at home, but instead of that it was yellow, sear and sandy; but the rising sun made it look like gold.

'Is it always like that—the grass—yellow?' I asked someone in the carriage.

'No, not after the rains. It is green then.'

'I suppose there's been a drought?' said I.

'Not more than usual. It's spring now, and the rains haven't come yet. We don't have rain in the winter up here. I don't think it has rained for three months, and the frost in the night kills the grass.'

'Not any rain for three months! Whatever do the people do?'

And I sat asking questions because I wanted to

know about things, and the passengers looked at me as if they thought I was mad. I told them I had only landed the day before, and then they looked upon my ignorance with pity rather than with disgust.

It was a beautiful morning, the sun had risen, and the sky was perfectly blue, bluer than ever I had known it in England, and the air was so clear one could see for miles and miles. Here was the grass veld, covering the flats and the long ranges of mountains which ran across them—rough, rugged mountains, all table-topped, with a crown of big rocks round the summit, and a cluster of thick little mimosa bushes at the bottom, which made a dark patch. Sometimes we were quite near them, and sometimes they were far away in the distance; but there were always some mountains somewhere to be seen, which broke the monotony, while not taking away from the wideness of the landscape. There were smaller hills, too—kopjes—covered with loose stones, as if they might have been the burying-place of some bygone chief. Few creatures were to be seen, fewer than usual, in the early morning—now and then a herd of cattle, perhaps a flock of sheep, and I got quite excited when we passed a Kaffir kraal, with its collection of beehive huts, babies and dogs, and the rest. The natives came out and grinned at us as we passed, and they stood watching us until we were far away. They had nothing much to do, and the train was still a wonder to them.

We passed stretches of country, not brown, but black.

'Why, what's happened?' said I.

'That's where it has been burnt,' they said. 'The farmers sometimes burn the veld before the rain comes, and that makes the grass grow better.'

'But it makes it look very ugly,' I said. And later on I learnt some more about colonial farming.

'Oh, look,' I said, turning round, 'that poor cow! I'm sure it's dead!'

'Oh yes, it's dead. It died of poverty. See its bones. My! it was thin. Well, you see, there's nothing for the cattle to eat now. The veld is as dry as a bone.'

'But have the animals only that dry grass to eat? Don't the farmers feed them on anything?'

'No. What is there to feed them on?'

'Well, don't they grow things—turnips and mangolds and stuff?'

'No. Some few of them try sometimes, but it doesn't do in this country. It's difficult to get water for the "lands." Most of the animals get through the winter somehow, when it isn't too dry, and the poorest ones die.'

'And they just leave them there on what do you call it—the veld? In England we sell them.'

A look of disgust. 'At home, I dare say. But out here only the Kaffirs would eat meat that died of itself, and some of the Boers, perhaps. We English don't do such things.'

'Oh, that wasn't what I meant! Of course, we shouldn't eat meat like that—except, perhaps, in beef extract. But I wonder they don't sell the animals for the hide.'

'What's the use of troubling to cart it away? The

vultures come and eat it up, and soon there are only the bones left.'

'And they just leave it there, and the farmers don't mind! How funny!'

Yes, everything seemed funny at first after our dear, prim old England, where there is a place for everything, and everything has to go in its proper place, and we wear our lives out arranging everything neatly. My first impression of the Cape was that it was the most untidy country I had ever seen—uncultivated land, with rocks scattered about and bushes; farm-houses without any appearance of beauty or comfort, mostly just stuck on the veld, with neither garden nor orchard around them; towns built anyhow, with different-shaped, irregular tin houses, erected on either side of rutty streets, which would have hopelessly wrecked any vehicle with decent springs. And the Kaffirs! At every station there were crowds of them, jabbering and chatting. All this struck me as a delightful breath of unconventionality, and gave a beautiful feeling of freedom. I fell quite in love with the new country as I looked out of the window.

South Africa rises in terraces from the sea, and we kept wearily ascending, and after leaving Queenstown, which forms quite an oasis with its clustering trees, the way became steeper and the country got more rugged. We had some beautiful peeps of scenery now and again, and looked down from above on to the crags, and the bush, and the strange-shaped trees, and prickly-pears, and the rivers rushing on in the distance. On we climbed all the morning up the

Stormberg Mountains, which is a rugged range rising over 6,000 feet above the sea-level, and containing the only coal-mines that are worked in the colony.

In the afternoon we stopped at Cyphergat—such a weird, bleak place, cold in winter and baking in summer! It strikes one as a mining camp; only everything is covered with coal-dust and is absolutely black; and there are black tunnels scooped into the sides of the hills, where the black boys pick at the coal like gnomes. There are apparently no trees about and no water, and the village looks utterly God-forsaken. The natives work in sugar-bags, which is a nice, primitive costume, and they cut slits in the bottom and the sides for their head and their arms to go through. When the train comes in they squat on the coal-trucks and grin at you through the carriage windows. I met a girl once who told me that she was the only girl in Cyphergat, and I forget how many men there were; but, anyhow, she told me 'she had it nice,' so I suppose she did not object to the mines and the surroundings.

We stopped at Molteno for lunch, which is another mining town, and seems almost as dreary and deserted as Cyphergat. There is also another place, too, where they get coal—at Indwe, not far away; but I never went there, although I heard a good bit about coal at one time. There are a few patriotic people at the Cape who urge that one ought 'to support Cape industries'; but there is a general suspicion in the air that Cape jams won't keep, that Cape candles literally bow down and fall at the slightest approach of the heat, and that Cape coal

won't burn. Whether these things are so I know not, but people like English goods (or English goods made in Germany) best, and the machine-men mostly stick to English coal, and the farmers keep to their thorn-twigs and cow-dung, as they did in the old Dutch days, so the coal industry does not flourish. Like everything and everybody at the Cape, it is apparently half asleep.

It was interesting to watch the people waiting for the mail-bag at the little wayside stations, for often in the country the station is the post-office too, and here the farmers for miles around have to send for their letters. As we drew up there was often a horse or two, with long tail and unkempt mane, to be seen tied up to the pales, and some buggies and Cape carts outspanned near by, while their owners smoked and chatted or dozed on the platform as they waited for the train to arrive.

At first I could not distinguish between the Boers and the other colonial farmers—they were all strong, healthy men, looking as if they had spent all their days in the open air, and had never bothered their heads by reading a book in their lives—but afterwards I could tell the difference quite well. There is something gaunt about these Low Dutch. Thin and tall they are mostly, with sallow complexion and fair hair —hair out of keeping with the hot climate and the sun—and with long, aimless beards waving in the wind. I watched a young Boer out of the carriage window. He was evidently a beau, strutting up and down, and clanking his spurs and smacking his top-boots with his sjambok. He had a huge felt hat pulled down over

his eyes, and a white scarf wound around it. He was calling out to the boys something in Cape Dutch, which, of course, I could not understand, but which sounded frightful. It is not, anyhow, a pretty language, and I could never learn it. I got to understand it a bit afterwards from my knowledge of German, for some words are rather alike; but the people never knew what I was saying when I tried my German on them, but then very likely a real German could not have done that. Most of the natives speak Low Dutch as well as the Kaffir, and some of them, happily, speak English too, and going along the boys at the stations soon understand if you want to buy anything: not that there is much to get outside the regular eating-places beyond a stray rusk or two and a cup of coffee. No literature, if you are that way inclined, can you obtain for love or money, so it is always best to provide yourself with amusement, if you want any, before you get on board the train.

I had books to read, but I didn't read them, it was all so new to me. And gradually the vastness and the loneliness of the country grew upon me as the afternoon drew in, while we went winding along the Stormberg Mountains and over the other side. I stood out in the passage of the corridor car, and watched the sun set behind a range of mountains in the distance. It tinged all the yellow veld with red and made it rosy. It was clear, as it had been all the day; it was the same scenery as in the morning—the veld on and on for miles, mountain ranges rising one behind the other, and now all getting blue and dark in the shadows of the evening. We saw no

signs of life for a long time, and then there was a farmer's boy looking at us with his big eyes from under his huge felt hat. He was driving the cows home. They were late, the sun had almost gone, but he stood still and stared. There is scarcely any twilight at the Cape. It gets dark at once, and it grew cold, very cold, for we were high above the sea, and it was as yet still spring.

I went back into my compartment, and the women seemed nice, so we talked. They were colonials. I knew that at once by their accent. If you tell people at the Cape they speak with a twang, they are angry with you, but it's true all the same; they do, and a very ugly accent it is. I noticed it very much when I first landed; then I got used to it, and finally, much against my will, I found myself talking in the same way myself. Besides a different accent, they have, of course, many words and expressions we don't use in England, which come from the Dutch, or even Kaffir; and there are slang words, too, which drift down from the goldfields, and which started the Lord knows where. Just like the comic songs, it is funny how they percolate down into the colony long after the boom for them is over in more lively lands. 'After the Ball is over' arrived at last when I was at the Cape, and a missionary had told me he found natives in Central Africa singing the bygone 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.' It may become the watchword of a tribe, and be dug up in after-years as a philological wonder.

We talked on together for some time, and I must say that going by train at the Cape I always found

people most sociable and kind, which makes the journeys much more interesting and enjoyable. You have some cake in your basket, and your neighbour has a wing of a chicken in hers, and you exchange and become friends on the spot, and by the time you part you feel as if you had known each other for years. One of my companions was a teacher, so we chatted school till we felt sleepy; then we pulled out our bunks, shut the door, wrapped ourselves well up in our rugs, and went to sleep.

In the middle of the night we were awoke at Middelburg. This is where I had to change and wait five hours for the Port Elizabeth train—a joyful prospect! Sometimes they allow you to wait in the carriages, and sometimes they turn you out. If you stay in the train it is fearful: in the winter you lie and freeze; in the summer you lie and stew and become a prey to mosquitoes. If you have to get out it is more fearful still. You might as well be stranded in the middle of the Sahara Desert. All around is quiet and weird; the platform is long and bare, with only a few flickering lights. The officials soon burrow back into their dens, and leave the wandering passengers to their own sweet devices. Not a bite, not a sup is there to be had. You could starve on that platform! The best thing to be done is to rush into the waiting-room, seize three chairs, put them alongside each other, wrap yourself up, lie down, and pretend to be asleep before the other women come in. If you can't possibly appropriate more than one chair, you have to sit up and blink all through the long, dreary hours until the other train, which generally is

late, comes in from somewhere. You bundle in, and find that even a railway carriage may sometimes be a foretaste of heaven.

I believe the town of Middelburg is some distance away from the station, but as I was only there in the night-time I could not see much of the neighbourhood. I have heard there are wonderful farms and sheep in that district, that people around have built sanatoria, that lung patients go there from England, and that several well-known persons have been natives of the place. I can only say I didn't see any of these things. The moonlight may be the proper time to see Melrose, but certainly not to see Middelburg Station, especially when you are tired and hungry.

Another doze and rest in the new train, and then once more the cry of 'Coffee!' to which I joyfully responded. I readily adopted that delightful colonial custom of 'early morning coffee,' which is never more delightful than when you are travelling by rail or by road. And then later on the guard poked his head in and said, 'Will you take breakfast at Cradock?' to which I also gave my assent.

Thus having provided for my bodily wants during the next hour or so, after a good wash I settled myself again to look at the scenery. The country was quite different now. The landscape had changed; the veld was no longer covered with the short yellow grass growing over the flats and the mountains. We were in the Karroo. It was green, too, and they evidently had had rain in those parts. The Karroo is so called from the tiny little bushes, about 2 or 3 inches high, with which the veld

is covered. No grass grows there, but however unappetizing it may look, the cattle eat and thrive on the twigs and leaves of these hard little plants.

But the character of the scene was the same—the veld on and on, still the same plains, and mountains, and ironstone kopjes. There are few trees in the Karroo, and wood is very scarce, only a clump of little thorn-trees here and there, and sometimes a cluster of green round a farmhouse where they have planted fruit-trees and willows.

These farmhouses look all exactly the same. We passed one every ten or fifteen miles or so, I suppose. Far away they are like little patches of white standing out from the green, but, going near by, we could see the whole homestead spread out as a map before us.

The house is generally a small, low building, one-storied and whitewashed, with a stoep (a raised platform) stretching along the front. It is planted down on the bare veld, and people drive up to the door anyhow or anywhere it pleases them. Not far away you see the dam, where the water is stored for the dry season, the group of beehive huts for the farm servants, a mud house or two where a Hottentot may live, or a poor Dutchman and his family who are cultivating the lands 'on the half.' There is no suggestion of luxury or ease, or even of comfort, about these places, and it seems as if the inhabitants had not yet got beyond the old Dutch idea that a house was only a fixed waggon, and useful for sleeping in at nights, when it is no longer possible to sit out in the sun.

It was going through the Karroo that I first saw

ostriches. Of course, though, I had seen some in the Zoo, but I expected to see much grander beings in an almost wild state. I was grievously disappointed, they were so ugly and gaunt. I had thought to find an ostrich a mass of snow-white plumes, already curled and crimped, as you see on a lady's hat; but instead of that there was a huge, ungainly bird, with a big body, covered with bedraggled feathers, which reminded me of the girls in Whitechapel, who, I then learnt, guilelessly wore their feathers *au naturel.* Ostriches thrive on the Karroo, where there is apparently nothing for them to eat; but they seem to find great savour in the little bony twigs and the ironstones, which, of course, they bolt whole. We saw some in all stages as we were going along—big ones, looking fierce, and little ones in droves; and here and there were flocks of goats or sheep, herds of cattle, or away in the distance we could distinguish an ox-waggon slowly creeping along, with a cloud of dust behind it. But these were all at long intervals from each other. It was generally veld, and nothing but the veld.

We got to Cradock for breakfast. It is a quiet little Dutch town of over 4,000 inhabitants, and stands on the banks of the Great Fish River, the spire of the fine Dutch Reformed Church towering high over everything. After leaving there we came to the most interesting scenery we had as yet passed through, especially by Cookhouse and onwards. The Karroo, with its hard, stunted vegetation and loose boulders of stone, gave way to a more bushy country. There were, as always, the mountains and the kopjes;

but there was a wilder look about the scenery, and sometimes there were chasms, and gorges, and sheer precipices of rock. None of the trees were large, and the bush was formed of short shrubs, which grew into each other and made a dense tangle. Strange plants some of them were, and I never got to know the names of them, if they had any. There was a quantity of prickly-pear, with its funny leaves ; and aloes, many kinds of them ; and the quaint euphorbia, with creeping plants binding them all together ; and I recognised the jessamine, and the plumbago, and several familiar hothouse plants at home. One could imagine wild beasts still lurking here in the bush—the lions and 'tigers' that frightened the early settlers, and the wilder savages, who frightened them still more. Even now in parts there are still herds of elephants, but they are fast disappearing, and will shortly become, if they are not so now, a thing of tradition only.

For some time we went along the banks of the Great Fish River, which, like all Cape rivers, was broad, rocky, and unnavigable. It was shallow now, and almost empty ; but the high, rugged banks, and the strength of the bridges that spanned it, told with what force and fury the river rushed down after the rains and to what a height it rose. It was quite beautiful all along there, and wild, and I shall remember it because of something that happened travelling there once. Not this time, but another, I was going down to Port Elizabeth with a lady and her husband, acquaintances of acquaintances, so we had got into the same carriage, and were travelling

together. The scene brought back to them old remembrances and other times, and they looked out of their side of the carriage and forgot all about me. They had been married nineteen years, and this was their first holiday. They were going on a trip to England. Nineteen years ago there was no railway here then, when he came down from Colesberg to Port Elizabeth to marry her, and then had taken her back with him in a Cape cart, with four horses. They were a month, I think, on the way home, stopping at different places and visiting friends. This was the road they had come along, alongside the river, near where the railway goes now. They remembered the turnings and the hills, and it was there, at the farmhouse behind the kopje, that they had outspanned and stopped for the night. They went through their reminiscences together, joyfully dwelling on them, living the time over again as if they were young. He put his arm round her waist, and they grew very loving, and—well, I pretended to be interested in a cow out of the other window. I felt quite a lump come into my throat; I don't know why. I suppose because it was all so funny. They were both so fat, and middle-aged, and plain.

Well, the train went on through the bush, with its weird little trees, and tangled masses, and red-headed aloes, which our soldiers during the wars used to mistake for the blankets of the natives, and at last we got to Alicedale. This was my last change, and I left the Port Elizabeth train and got into one on the branch line which runs up to Grahamstown. I have never noticed anything particularly

striking about Alicedale, or, rather, the station, except the numbers of clergymen and Sisters one generally sees about on the platform. Of course, I was usually travelling at the beginning or end of the school holidays, so that may have accounted for it, but, anyhow, there were lots of holy people there. They always struck me as messengers sent to prepare the way to the City of the Saints, which Grahamstown is either reverently or ironically called, from the numerous ecclesiastical and scholastic institutions which adorn the town.

Happily, I had no trouble with my luggage, and on we went again, past the mountains above and the kloofs below us, and just as the sun was setting we steamed into Grahamstown. The sky was still red, but the lamps were lit, and twinkled out from the houses buried among the trees. A short pause outside for tickets, and we glided into the station. I was glad to get there, for, though I had enjoyed the journey, I wanted to have a good rest. We had taken about thirty-four hours from Queenstown, I believe, and my eyes were quite tired with looking about, and I felt I had lived in the colony for years.

No sooner had we stopped than my carriage was invaded. 'Cab, missus?' 'No, me, missus!' the natives pushing each other and jabbering. They seized hold of my baggage before my very eyes, while I feebly protested.

I gazed helplessly around. Someone spied me in the distance and came towards me. It was a lady in spectacles, and she was quite English. She looked as if she had read, marked, and learned for many

exams, and, what is a great thing nowadays, had inwardly digested it all.

'Miss Hicks?' she said. 'I have come to meet you—from the D.S.G. And your luggage?'

I explained that it had been wafted away by some black beings who wanted to drive me off in a cab.

'Oh, but,' she said, 'I've brought John. We always employ John.'

After a deal of trouble and vituperation I managed to regain my property, and we set off in an open fly under the care of the trusty John, leaving the other natives swearing at the station. It was quite dark, and I could not see much of the place as we went along.

'They say that Grahamstown is the most English town in the colony,' said my companion. 'In fact, it is quite like England.'

'Oh!' said I, as the vehicle dashed into an enormous sluit and we violently lurched to one side.

I found out afterwards it was the state of society, not the state of the roads, to which she was referring.

CHAPTER III

IN GRAHAMSTOWN

GRAHAMSTOWN may well be called the City of the Saints. It has between 6,000 and 7,000 inhabitants, and in proportion is so rich in spiritual blessings that it could easily satisfy the most fastidious of sanctimonious tastes. The city itself is adorned with buildings of a religious or semi-religious character, which rise up loftily among the blue-gum trees, and seem to put to shame any others which may have been erected or are inhabited from purely secular motives. To begin with, it boasts of an Anglican Bishop and cathedral, and a boys' school, girls' school, and missions connected with the Church. Then there is a large Roman Catholic settlement, with also a Bishop and a cathedral and schools and convents and other holy institutions. The Wesleyans are not to be outdone; they have schools and chapels and a large Commemoration Church. Finally, there are the Congregationalists and Baptists, and the guide-book cheerfully adds, 'The Plymouth Brethren and the Salvation Army have places of worship as well.' I was going to the Church school—the Diocesan School for Girls, or D.S.G., as it was called for short

—so, of course, it is only from hearsay that I know anything of the other denominations. I remember, though, we did not dislike the Roman Catholics as much as we did the Wesleyans. These last had a very good high school for girls, so perhaps that was why.

Besides the two bishoprics and the holy institutions, Grahamstown boasts of being the seat of the law-courts for the eastern provinces, and also now possesses a garrison, so that altogether society is of quite a different tone to that generally met with in South African towns. So many people are English by birth, or have been educated at home, that they take a wider interest in reading and in all the topics of the day; they have their own little cliques and are exclusive, order their clothes from Europe, and stop in on mail-days to write letters—I understood—'it was all so English!'

But the city itself was quite foreign. It is a pretty place for those who like colonial scenery, with quantities of trees, which one doesn't get in all towns in South Africa. They grow along the streets, and some of the roads leading into the country are lined on either side with tall shady groves; there are many blue-gums among them, which tower up gracefully and smell aromatic. The Public Gardens in Grahamstown are beautiful and well kept, not overkept, though, as in many places parts are quite wild like the original veld. The soil and the climate must be good. I noticed some tropical plants there—bamboos and palms. The flowers all seemed to flourish; roses grew luxuriantly,

and we used to buy them from the curator—he gave us a large bunch for sixpence.

Once, when I was in the gardens, I wanted to find a short-cut on to another road, so I went through a little gate leading through a hedge. It was still a lovely garden, with little paths winding through the shrubs and flowers; but I was surprised when I looked up and saw, sitting on the rocks and on the grass underneath the trees, Sisters dressed in their habits and white caps. I felt I was trespassing, so I stood still and looked. Some of them had books, some had not; they were all perfectly silent, their eyes cast down, and they scarcely seemed to move. They took not the slightest notice of me, and if they saw me they pretended they did not. It really was quite eerie. I felt as the prince might have done in the sleeping forest. I still waited, but no one came to ask me my business, so at last I summoned up courage to walk over the grass to one of the least austere-looking Sisters.

'I'm—I'm afraid I've gone wrong. I couldn't help it. I wanted to find a short-cut from the gardens, you know, and I came here. Can you tell me——'

She half raised her eyes, and said solemnly, 'We are having retreat,' and sank again into meditation.

'Oh!' I said. I didn't know then what 'retreat' was, but I felt I'd done something dreadful, and hastily went out the way I came.

There are many holy women in Grahamstown. I believe these belonged to an Anglican Order. There had been Fathers, too, I heard; but they had

married, and so were a thing of the past. But the Sisters are still there.

Somewhere in the gardens were some graves; almost covered with the boughs and leaves, they seemed forgotten. I think they were those of some officers or soldiers who were killed at the time of the Kaffir War, when the colony was still little and the town was only a small frontier station, when the early settlers lived in fear of their lives and the lions and elephants still roamed around. Times have changed since then. Instead of a rough life, the inhabitants of Grahamstown can now live in comfort, and even luxury; the children are supposed to have all the latest benefits of education, instead of, as in the early days, 'learning to write in a sand-box, and if more pupils wanted to learn than there were boxes for, they had to go down to the river and get a fresh supply of sand from the bank.'

There are many pretty walks and drives round Grahamstown, notably one called the Mountain Drive, which winds up above the town high on to the hills. From it most exquisite views of the country are spread out below like a panorama, all rolling bush veld, with most wonderful effects of sky and distance. On a clear day you can see as far as the ocean.

Grahamstown itself is shut in by the hills and lies in a hollow. On one side is the Kaffir location, where the native servants live and go back to sleep every night after their work in the town; on the other side lies the West Hill, where the 'aristocrats' live; and between is the town, with its broad streets, public

buildings, and in the centre a square where a market is held in the morning, and the Kaffirs in charge of the waggons rest for awhile and go to sleep in the sun. It is a large open space, at one end St. George's Cathedral, and at the side the Town Hall, with the Library and the Museum, where there appeared to be nothing whatever to look at. A road from the station leads past the cathedral and on; then it turns to the right, up the West Hill, and there on the top is the D.S.G.

The school was first founded in 1874 as an outcome of a want which was felt for some educational institution for the girls in that part of the colony. The question was discussed at the Diocesan Synod, with the result that the school was started in a small way, under the guidance of the Bishop. But afterwards it greatly increased in size and importance. The building is large and of stone, two stories high, and has recently been enlarged ; but one can distinguish the original part quite well, with a modest front-door and a stoep covered with creepers. In the grounds are good gravel tennis-courts for the girls, and a large garden stretching away at the back where all the vegetables are grown for the college, and which ends in a big prickly-pear hedge at the bottom of the hill.

Girls of all sorts and ages, ugly and pretty, civil and rude, cultured and vulgar; little bedrooms for the teachers, big dining-hall, class-rooms, and dormitories for the girls; a red-brick chapel outside; the headmistress and about half a dozen other mistresses and some visiting-masters; the Dean, who had come

to give a sermon; and the black servants, with their handkerchiefs round their heads—these were my first impressions of the D.S.G.

And I fear I never got much beyond these first impressions. Until I arrived there, I did not know that the school year at the Cape is divided into two half-years, not, as with us, into three terms. I went there at the end of September, and found myself in the middle of the half-year's work, with all the lessons begun and the classes arranged, and besides, everything was in confusion! It was apparently a period of interregnum. I didn't know the cause of it all or how it began; I don't now. The headmistress and a few adherents were fighting against some of the other mistresses and their adherents. By fighting I mean they were not on speaking terms with each other. It was literally a house divided against itself. And then there were the committee, and the Bishop, and the rest, who were either on one side or the other or tried to be neutral. And the girls, they took sides, too, and became 'rebellious daughters,' and one dire day the entire school was marched off to the Bishop to be scolded. I believe that this was only a slight phase in the career of the school. I heard it had been well managed once upon a time, and now, doubtless, again it is under excellent control and in every way worthy of its former brilliant reputation, and is doing good work among the daughters of the colony.

My remembrance of it for the three months I lived there is an absolute blur. Lessons seem to have been conducted on the principle of the mad tea-

party in 'Alice in Wonderland,' everybody chasing each other aimlessly round about. Then, twice a day a bell rang, we suddenly forsook all and fled into the chapel, prostrated ourselves, and prayed. Then we got up and rushed, and the confusion began again and the fighting, and so it was day after day. Amidst all this I had some difficulty in finding out what was my work and how it was to be done. No one seemed to have any time to explain; when they weren't busy they went to church. So altogether I fear I did not greatly distinguish myself; besides, at that time of my life I was very shy, and I have not even the redeeming—I mean the all-important—quality of being good-looking, so I don't think I excited much regard, either with the teachers or the pupils.

As to the girls themselves, they were, as I said, of all sorts and descriptions—some English, some half Dutch, some wholly Dutch, but all quite different to any girls that I had ever seen at home. And the colonial boys that went to St. Andrew's, the school on the West Hill—too suspiciously near to the D.S.G.—they were not at all like schoolboys at home, either. I say suspiciously near, because girls will be girls and boys will be boys—more so in the colony than anywhere else.

I was astonished at many little things at first, but I suppose I was a bit prim. As I said before, I had been educated at an excellent school, where the one idea was to prepare for an exam. When that had been successfully mastered, there was another one and stiffer looming in the distance. It was a case of

'Excelsior,' and the steeps we climbed were those of knowledge. Frivolity and boys did not enter into our calculations. Boys we only looked upon as inferior and conceited beings, whom it was our duty to beat in exams, and who afterwards in time grew into undergraduates, who were more inferior and more conceited beings still, who denied us our rights, and whom it was necessary to beat again in order to vindicate the honour of our sex. Having been brought up in these wholesome and vainglorious ideas, it was somewhat of a shock to me to find myself landed in a school where scarcely any of the scholars seemed to come with any idea of learning. The majority were there to be 'finished,' whatever that may mean, and, having been finished, would most likely return to their homes up-country with an extra halo round their heads.

I met a girl in the Eastern Province, a nice girl she was, and we were talking together.

'Oh yes,' she said, 'I was down at Grahamstown at school. I only left at Christmas, and they've been teasing me ever since. They say I've got quite grand and that they wouldn't know me. Charlie —— says so—the boy I was dancing with, you know. He thinks I put on side. I don't see, though, why I should, just because I've been down to Grahamstown to school, do you?'

'No,' I replied truthfully, 'I certainly do not.'

It is only after one has lived on a farm far away from everybody and everything that one can understand what a change it is in the life of a girl to be sent away to school, even to a small town like

Grahamstown. Perhaps she has never been in a train before, certainly not for a long journey, and necessarily the meeting with new people and new experiences, such as they are, must open her mind and broaden her ideas and make her realize that the whole world is not bounded by the wire fence of her father's farm or contained in the sugar-bags of her brother's store. But, coming straight from England, I naturally did not see things in this light. Compared with English girls, well——

The impression that the girls at the school made on me was that they had come to enjoy themselves, not in an intellectual, but in an exclusively feminine way, and this was, unfortunately, apt to cause disagreements between the teachers and the pupils. I heard of a romance connected with the place, and it is so pretty I hope it is true. A boy from St. Andrew's came on some errand or other to the D.S.G. He was shown into the drawing-room, and there, sitting at the piano, was a girl. It was a case of love at first sight: the boy and the girl became engaged, and in due time they were married. He is a judge now, and she is a pretty woman with a pretty voice. But, alas for poetry and romance! not all these youthful attachments are so devoted or so lasting, and they pass away with the forgotten nonsense of school-days!

It was a long time before I could quite realize the difference between English women and colonial women, and their respective ideas concerning the aims and ambitions of life. When I first landed, and was still possessed of some of my English energy, I

inquired after the progress of 'women's rights' at the Cape.

'There are none out here,' they said.

'What!' I said. 'I thought the Cape was like New Zealand and America. Don't women vote or try to? Don't they take an interest in politics? Don't they run crazes or head movements? Aren't there any societies for women's suffrage? For I should like to join one, for unity is strength, and I always agree with women banding together.'

'No,' they said. 'We have no new women here. They don't think of that sort of thing.'

'Well, what do they think about, then? What do they do?'

'They stay at home and look after the house.'

'Why, that's what our women did fifty years ago. We've outgrown that. But if all haven't homes?'

'Then they teach.'

'Is that all they can do?'

'Or nurse.'

'Teaching and nursing?'

'And some girls take up typewriting now; but they most of them marry.'

'Then, I suppose there are as many men as women out here?'

'There used to be, but it's changing now. At the seaport places there are always enough men—young ones—sent out to the offices from England; but up-country lots of the men have been trekking further north still—to Rhodesia and those parts—and the girls are left behind.'

'But are there no women who do anything besides housekeeping?'

'Oh, well, there's Olive Schreiner.'

And I soon learnt that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country.

Olive Schreiner! I always loved her 'Story of an African Farm,' and hoped to find her Waldo herding the goats on the veld, dreaming dreams as he sat in the sun. But I never did, nor Lyndall either, nor anyone else that was 'advanced' or had ideas. There were lots of Ems, though, and Tante Sannes; and the Kaffirs, and the Hottentots, and the moonlight, and the farmhouses, just as in the book. That part is very true. About that time, too, she wrote another tale about Mashonaland, in which Rhodes, Jesus, and a policeman were somehow mixed up, and the people did not like it—even the ones that had not read it; but they talked about it and her, and I heard many wonderful anecdotes and much gossip, and, of course, did not believe half of it. But, still, Olive Schreiner is the only woman in South Africa, so they ought to be proud of her, and be thankful for whatever mercy has been bestowed on them.

Cape girls as a rule grow up and develop much sooner than English ones. Some are quite grown-up at sixteen. This, of course, accounts for the early age at which they marry. In fact, some often get engaged as schoolgirls, perhaps more so some years back than now. But these engagements are not, apparently, at all binding, and it is not in the least unusual to meet a girl who has been engaged two or

three times before finally deciding her future, and the same with the men.

Talking of young engagements, I remember one which took place in Queenstown while I was there. She was a schoolgirl, with short dresses and long hair, with a big fringe in front, but she was quite 'all there.' He was a clerk in a bank, and was also quite youthful; but, nevertheless, he had previously been engaged to a young lady in Grahamstown—he evidently had a penchant for schoolgirls! And I remember now how her little friends came to congratulate her, and she received them grandly, and stuck out her third finger and twirled her ring around, at which the others gazed with envy and admiration.

After all this, the few divorce cases there are at the Cape astonished me very much. However silly, frivolous, and flirting girls may be before they marry, directly after they settle down and develop into good cooks and good mothers. I don't know, though, if it is right to put it in that order, or whether good mothers oughtn't to come first; but we all like good cooks, and good mothers—well, they are sometimes apt to be a bore, as they wander off into rhapsodies over their offspring in the mistaken idea that everyone is as interested in their children as they are themselves. No, I like good cooks best. Unfortunately, I am not a mother, so perhaps I cannot understand a mother's feelings, but I do understand something good to eat.

But to return to the school. What work I had to do was not particularly hard, and I don't think I did

it particularly well. The lessons and the periodical walks seemed to take up most of the week-days, but there were such times as half-holidays and extra festive occasions, when the whole school broke out into frivolity together. Such, I recollect, was a staid garden-party at the Bishop's, a treat given to the orphans from St. Peter's Home, etc., and the very next morning after I arrived we all went off for a day's picnic.

Picnics and dances are the two great amusements in the colony. To pack up his daily bread and then sit out on the veld and eat it is a South African's idea of bliss; with a waggon-trip included it is a joy untold! It is not a wicked taste, anyhow—a delightful way of wasting a day in the open air! This picnic was the first I had been to, and it was all such a fresh experience. We tumbled into two large waggons drawn by twelve or fourteen oxen, and covered with a sail-cloth. The hampers were packed in, the kettle was hung on below, the 'boys' smacked their long whips and called 'Trek!' Oh, it all seemed so novel and nice till we started, and then—the jolts and the bumps! The yearning for deliverance by death was passed at a very early stage, and I could only lie resigned as a helpless jelly, and the girls said, 'Do tell us a story!' or 'What game shall we play?' to add insult to injury. They had been brought up on jolts—I hadn't. I afterwards discovered why it was so bad. Generally in waggon-travelling they put mattresses at the bottom, or have a 'kartel,' but here there was nothing but the bare boards, and we banged about like peas in a pod.

The alternative to lying in the waggon was to get out and trudge behind in the blazing sun and in clouds of dust. The oxen scarcely ever go beyond a walk, so there was no difficulty in keeping up.

We stopped at last, and, indeed, it was a pretty place, well worth the trouble of coming to. It was called Howitson's Poort, Poort meaning an opening or gate through the hills, forming a pass for the road. On either side the rocks came down sheer, making a krantz, as they call it. Over these precipices in olden times the natives would hurl their captives or their criminals, and there was no chance of life left after that fatal fall. There was a pool of water, by which we had lunch in the cool and the shade, and a river running by the side of the road, where we found ferns and moss growing, and rushes. On our way to and from the Poort we passed beautiful beds of arum lilies, clustering in profusion, and we gathered large bunches to add to the general collection inside the waggons. I was glad to get home and rest after the jolts, although I had spent a very novel and amusing day.

As I said, I have no distinct recollection of the school routine, but I remember the thing I disliked most was the meals; but I presume they are loathsome at all schools. Not that the food was in the least degree bad; I am under the impression that it was wholesome and satisfying, but, still, the mere fact of hordes of females sitting round long tables with plates at intervals filled with wholesome and satisfying bread-and-butter is morbid in the extreme. One always felt that everybody was longing for something

that wasn't there. The teachers took it in turns to preside at the tables, and it seemed to be my turn so often. Sunday was a sort of field day in the food line, and one Sunday dinner is among the saddest remembrances of my life, so I cannot refrain from recording it.

We had chickens—chickens which had come out of the ark and were grown up then—and I had to carve them. Poor me! Imagine the scene! I was quite youthful, and I don't think I'd ever tried to carve a fowl before; I know I haven't since. I stood up boldly to my work, with the eyes of fifteen or more hungry mortals—hungrier than ever after his lordship's sermon—glued on me. I began bravely, plunged my fork into the fattest fowl, and set to work to find the joints with the knife. I don't think it had any; at least, I couldn't feel them. I poked about; the wretched thing wouldn't come undone. In despair I turned to the next, and the next, but with the same result. They seemed made of cast iron. I shaved off the breast, which was given to a few lucky pupils, while the others still stared more hungrily than ever at me as I wrestled on at the carcase. To make matters worse, we could hear the tappings of knives and forks at the other tables, and knew they were well under way. I was in despair, and turned back to the original hen. It was still obdurate. I got wild. I could have taken the wretched thing by the legs and bashed it against the wall. The situation was desperate, but rescue came at last. It was in the shape of the old white servant, who had pity on me, and took possession of the disfigured brood.

She was evidently accustomed to their antiquity, and soon distributed portions to the starving, while I meekly sank back in my chair at the head of the table. But, unfortunately, we can never make up for lost time, and halfway through the pudding course the bell for grace was rung, and one by one the pupils at my table had to leave and forsake their Sunday pie. Each gave me a look of mingled anger and disdain, and I never felt so contemptible in my life. There always was enough pudding to go round once and for some to be left over, so that those who gobbled in a ladylike manner got two serves, while the others who lagged behind in a nonchalant way only got one portion. You could easily see which girls would get on afterwards in the world and which wouldn't. But on this occasion, poor things! they were all done out of half their course—no wonder they hated me.

I felt quite despondent about this; honestly, I don't think I ever felt so sad about anything in my life. I know there are many idiotic things I did I ought to have taken to heart much more, both in school and beyond, and long afterwards, but this trial stands out more vividly than any other in my remembrances. I don't know why: I suppose it was because I felt such an utter fool. In other cases there were extenuating circumstances. For instance, I could bear being cut by the Canon's daughter or anyone else's daughter with calm philosophy, as I was morally certain I had many more brains than she had; but this—this was something which touched my *amour propre* to the very core. I had been beaten—absolutely beaten—by a wretched Kaffir hen!

There are many other episodes I could write, not quite so sad, but, still, very trying. A house full of women is in itself always very trying. I was tired of the place, and I believe the people there were tired of me, and the summer was coming on, and it grew hotter every day. Grahamstown lies low, and when it is summer it is very stuffy. I had not yet got into the sensible colonial way of lying down in the middle of the day, which makes you feel so much fresher; in fact, the school hours were not arranged for that. The nights were hot too. Everybody seemed to be longing for the holidays, and when the examinations came the blissful time did not seem so far off. As is usual, there was a grand breaking up, when the dear children acted and the dear mammas came to see them act, and the whole house was in a turmoil of packing up, and places had to be booked in the post-cart, and train journeys had to be arranged under proper escorts, while the girls who lived far away, and had to spend their holidays at school, looked on with sorrowful eyes.

Owing to some misunderstanding, I found myself suddenly stranded. I was not at all sorry to leave the D.S.G., but I naturally wanted somewhere to lay my head and get a little money, and so I began looking about. I advertised and answered advertisements, and then with a light heart went down to Port Elizabeth to stay for Christmas, and spent a very festive time there with some friends of some friends in England, in the sure and certain hope that something would turn up. And my experience is, something always does. A very good motto

to carry through life with one is, 'Don't worry, but wait.'

Before I went down to Port Elizabeth, calling one afternoon, I met a clergyman.

'Wouldn't you mind leaving Grahamstown?' he asked, as if Grahamstown were civilization and civilization were bliss.

'Oh no,' I said.

'I wonder if you would like farm life. . . . I know of someone who is wanting a governess. Very nice people they are. Have you ever tried it?'

'No; but I should like to go.'

'Well, I don't think you'll care about it.'

And it was curious that, after all, I went to the farm near Queenstown he so kindly told me about, and I never regretted it.

As to the advertisements I answered and put in the paper, I found out that some people wanted me, and some people, of course, did not. Judging from my own experience and from that of others, I do not think that work—teaching on a farm—is at all difficult to get. The only drawback is that it takes a long time to arrange, owing to the distance the people on the farms are from the post-office; they often do not get their letters more than once a week. It is hopeless, too, to think of interviewing anybody or being interviewed, so I could only trust to get a home where I should be comfortable. The salaries offered to me ranged from about £30 to £80, of course including board and lodging.

I felt very much inclined to accept the post at £80 a year, but afterwards I decided not. The school

was far away up in the Western Province, two days' journey by post-cart from the train, and then another day's journey by private cart. And, then, the people were Dutch. That decided me. I had heard stories of Dutch persons and Dutch farms, and, much as I yearned for experiences, my heart failed me. How could I ever get away if I hated myself? I imagined myself there for years, vainly seeking to escape, each day trying to walk to somewhere over the desert veld, and being fetched back each night by the farmer without ever having seen a soul!

I had some amusing letters, which I still keep. One lady the first time of writing went into minute details: 'Daisy is working for the Fourth Standard; she is such an intelligent child and so affectionate, and I am sure she will like her new teacher. Tom and Florrie you will also find excellent pupils. They are working for the Fifth Standard, but as Tom fell down when he was gathering peaches in the garden a little while back, and hurt himself, I'm afraid he is a little behind Florrie in his lessons; but you will see what you think of him,' etc. Another lady, who wrote me a letter very badly and ungrammatically, made the following announcement: 'Our two last teachers left to be married. They always say this is their home.' Even the chances of a husband were not sufficient inducement to me to accept the situation, as, under the circumstances, I was afraid the husband would not be able to spell.

You must not think, though, that during all this time I was a homeless wanderer. People were very good and kind, as I found they always were in the

colony. I stayed a fortnight at Port Elizabeth, and then at Stone's Hill, a place in the bush, outside Grahamstown, where the scenery is very pretty, and where we picnicked about all day on the veld. And then through other people I heard that on a farm near by they wanted someone for the time being to do something. It was very indefinite, and I found it very indefinite when I got there. But there were children to teach, that was the principal idea, and I thought it was a good thing to go and keep myself and get a little money, until I had settled upon something more permanent.

So about the end of January I packed up my things again and said 'Good-bye' to the D.S.G., and shook the dust of Grahamstown off my feet. I had never lived among such holy people before, and I had never been so uncomfortable, but I dare say it was my own fault.

But, of course, there were other persons in the town that I knew who were nicer and not quite so good, and who were very hospitable; these I shall always look upon with kind remembrance, but, still—it was all so English! And I looked forward to going out to a farm to see what real colonial life was like.

CHAPTER IV

ON A FARM IN ALBANY

WITH regard to my new quarters, as far as religion was concerned, it was out of the frying-pan into the fire. I had been living with people who regarded Nonconformity as really wicked, besides being socially low. To them all things were possible except Dissent; and here these people to whom I was going were Dissenters, and, what is more, gloried in the fact. What a difference, and yet how alike they were! In some ways these were good, worthy folk, and they knew it, too, because *they* were saved! Anything to them in the way of a Prayer-Book or a cross was as a red flag to a bull. They answered all your trivial arguments with a volley of texts, which they gleefully hurled down upon your luckless head. They also thoroughly believed in a personal devil, and pictured him as the proverbial Midianite prowling and prowling and prowling around. The Romish Church was exclusively his property, and the Anglican Church—well, anybody who knew the signs of the times said *that* was going over to Rome, and, of course, for Rome read perdition.

When I had arrived, and we were arranging the lessons, the mother said to me:

'We hope you will open school every day with prayer.'

'Very well, if you wish it,' said I, and chose the next morning some prayers from the service of the Church of England.

A few days afterwards one of the children came up to me and said:

'Father says he doesn't want you to read prayers out of that book.'

So accordingly I was reduced to making up prayers extempore, which, I discovered, unfortunately, was not my strong point. The gist of them, I remember, consisted of petitions for the children to become good, obedient, truthful, neat, tidy, cleanly, not quarrelsome, attentive, eager to learn, etc., none of which things were answered—at least, not in my time; but perhaps I asked too much.

Yes, the one excitement and amusement of their lives was their religion. They were praying, as at the D.S.G., at all times and at all seasons, but here they took it in turns. The only dissipation on that farm that we had was to go to other people's farms and convert them. These other people would take life easily, and go into town for church once a month or so; but that was not the living faith—not like ours. In Grahamstown they had sung hymns—many of them—out of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern'; here we sang 'Will you meet me at the River?' with a chorus and no Amens.

The contrast between the two faiths struck me

very much, and the way their adherents hated each other struck me still more. Why I say so much about religion is not because I want to appear irreligious (that I hope I am not), but because all this outward show and sham made such an impression on me at the time, and so largely influenced my feelings on the subject. I had been brought up amongst honest people, who made no great profession of faith, but who tried to do their duty both to themselves and their fellow-men. That was all. Here was I, by the irony of Fate, landed among strangers who every hour of the day called themselves Christians, and yet were the most hypocritical set I had ever met!

Being young, of course it was quite a shock at first. I never quite realized before that religion is with most of us, like love in a man's life, a thing apart, and that the conduct of a Christian is, in most cases, in exact inverse ratio to the profession that he displays. I got to know this in time, and now I'm not shocked any more.

This all reminds me of an amusing incident which happened to me some years later when going up to the Transvaal. We stopped to have our luggage examined at the little Dutch frontier station Vereeniging, where the officials, rightly or wrongly, had the reputation of being fairly arrogant and impertinent. The man, a Hollander, I believe, though he spoke English perfectly, came to examine my luggage.

'I am a teacher,' I said, 'travelling with a teacher's ticket,' as I had heard if you told them

this, they did not generally trouble much about your boxes.

'Umph!' he said, looking at me. 'Have you anything to declare?'

'No,' I said.

'Are you a Sunday-school teacher?'

'No, of course not.'

'An ordinary teacher?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, well, all right, then. Here are your keys. You say you have nothing to pay duty on? If you were a Sunday-school teacher I shouldn't believe you.'

Apparently the Customs official and myself had feelings in common. But enough of all this.

I had never been on a farm in South Africa before, so everything was new to me. It was a good long drive out from Grahamstown, and we passed through beautiful scenery—everywhere bush veld. We went through Howitson's Poort again, where we had had the waggon picnic, and on by a road running by the side of a stream, dried up now, underneath a big krantz, where climbing plants were trying to grow on the steep sides. We were in a little buggy with a white hood and two horses, and we jolted from side to side over the uneven road. On our way we stopped at an 'accommodation house,' where they had been indulging in the unwonted luxury of killing an ox, and the woman kindly allowed us to buy a piece, so with what seemed to me a quarter of a bullock, we went on again. There are no big trees in the bush—they are short and stumpy, many of them with gray,

gnarled trunks, twisted and quaint—so from the cart we could see all over the surrounding country. It was very undulating, with different shades of green. Here and there were thinner patches, where the cattle could wander in search of their food. We saw several herds with black boys looking after them. It got hot in the middle of the day, and we were very glad of the protection of the hood, especially as we got no shelter from the trees. We passed few farmhouses, but could see one now and again peeping out white from amid the green, and at last we got to an antediluvian gate in a wire fence, and knew that we were nearing our destination. At the same time a crowd of little white children with bare feet—my future charges—came running down the hill to meet us. They scrambled into the cart, and we all drove up together to the house, which was built in a sort of oasis in the bush.

It was like the majority of the colonial farmhouses —one story high, small, with a long stoep running along the front. There was no trim gravel path with neatly-clipped box on either side. We shared the possession of the front-door with the hens, dogs, calves, Kaffir children, and any of the animals that might be wandering around. Near by the farmhouse is always the cattle kraal, or enclosure, where the cows are milked in the morning and evening, built of big stones piled loosely one on top of one another, with a long pole for a gate. There are outbuildings, too, perhaps—the cart-house, the dairy, or the store, where are kept the bags of provisions and the rations for the servants, who live in their own

little colony of huts not far away. The garden is often some distance from the house; it has to be near the river or dam, so that the water can be 'led' on to it. There are, too, the 'lands' where the mealies and the corn are planted, but they were not very large on this farm. It was expensive work clearing the bush first, burning the wood, and then stubbing up the roots, so the farmer went in mostly for cattle and ostriches, especially ostriches.

The farm was not a large one for the colony, between 1,500 and 2,000 acres, and beyond the small space reserved for cultivation it was left as bush in its natural state, but here and there it was divided off into enclosures of different sizes called camps, which might correspond to our fields at home if they were not very much larger. The land lay in the district known as the Zuurveld, from the fact that the grass there is sour and has a bitter taste, which makes it unfit for sheep, and on which the cattle do not thrive so well as they do in the Karroo, or where the ordinary sweet grass grows. But, on the other hand, cattle bred on the Zuurveld will not eat any but the sour grass, and *vice versâ*, and we had many specimens of huge oxen on our farm. They are all of a big, bony description, mostly black and white, with tremendously large horns, which in some cases seem to weigh their heads quite down. They are used for all the farm-work, ploughing, and drawing the waggons, and in the early days the colonists used even to ride them, we are told.

As I have mentioned before, they kept large quantities of ostriches on this farm, and so I had an

opportunity of seeing more of them than I had done from the train. They were here in all stages: little ones, looking like very big goslings with gray tips on their down, like the quills of a porcupine; bigger ones, with their necks grown longer, which the boys used to drive along like a flock of sheep; old ones, big and fierce, with strong necks and bare, ugly legs and heavy talons. Sometimes the birds were in a camp opposite the house, and we would watch them: the grown-up ones would now and again waltz about, to our great amusement, in the funny way they have, round and round, spreading out their wings and waving them up and down in rhythm.

We never ventured into the camp where the ostriches were if we knew it, for at times they are very wild, and would soon with their powerful feet kick a man to death. They cannot fly, but rush along the ground like the wind, and escape by running is impossible to the poor human they have espied in the distance. The only thing to be done under the circumstances, if there is no cover or bush near, is to lie down flat on one's face, and let the bird run past you or over you. So you have to stay in peril of your life till the sun sets and the ostrich goes to sleep. I heard of two men once who were riding along on a road over the veld on their bicycles. Evidently the ostriches were suspicious of this strange new animal, and what was the horror of the bicyclists when they saw a huge bird bearing down on them like lightning. With great presence of mind they lay down together on the ground, covering themselves with their machines. Here they kept still, while the

ostrich rushed up to them and stamped ferociously up and down on top of them all. When the farm men have to go into the camp where the 'wild' birds are, they creep cautiously along the fence, taking with them a large faggot of thorns to cover them in front, and to thrust at the neck of the ostriches if occasion should arise.

I never saw them hiding their heads in the sand or leaving their eggs to hatch in the sun, as we are always taught in primer books that they do. Perhaps that was in their wild state. They have been domesticated for between thirty and forty years now, so very likely they have given up those eccentric ways. Down in the colony, when the eggs are not put in an incubator, they are hatched in the ordinary way, except that the male bird takes his share in the work. The female, having brownish plumage, which is not unlike the browny, yellow veld, sits during the day-time, and the male bird, with his black back, takes his turn when the night comes on; they change as regularly as clockwork. Incubators were first invented and used in 1869, and there was an astonishing increase in the feather trade, and the birds themselves cost enormous prices. Other countries wanted to follow suit and go in for ostrich-farming, but the Cape Government resolved to keep this as a monopoly, and put an export duty of £100 a head on each bird sent abroad, and £5 on each egg. The feather mania, however, did not last long; reaction set in, and many people who had speculated were ruined; but even at the present day ostriches form a fairly lucrative source of income in farming at the Cape.

Some people still imagine, and I believe I thought so, too, once, that to get the feathers you plucked ostriches in the same way as you do geese, only that they were alive. Not at all; there is no cruelty whatever about it. When the feathers are what they call ripe, the bird is driven into a pen, a hood is put over its head to prevent it looking around and kicking, the quills are then cut with scissors, and the stumps in course of time drop out of themselves. This district, in Albany, is very good for feathers, and there are markets in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, at which the merchants buy for export for England. The ordinary feathers are done up in bundles and sold by weight, and an expert buyer can tell the exact price by just running his fingers through the bundle.

Talking of ostriches, I once had an exciting adventure with one. It was on this farm, and I was going for a walk one afternoon with the children. We got through a wire fence into a camp, where there were clumps of bushes and prickly-pear, and we were walking along quite happily, when all of a sudden we saw an angry ostrich bearing down on us. We did not know there was one in the camp! The elder children had their wits about them and dashed back to the fence, while I and the little one bolted for refuge in the opposite direction—into a clump of prickly-pears! Oh, it was horrible! We got covered with pricks and spikes, but happily the ostrich dashed by, and, taking the child's hand, I seized the opportunity and made a rush across the open space for the fence. Just in time; as we tumbled through anyhow,

the ostrich turned and stalked by, and gazed at us viciously as we lay sprawling on the other side. I had heard a tremendous tearing, and found that my dress—it was a print one—was in huge rents, for, to add to our troubles, the fence, as usual, had been made of barbed wire. So that ended our walk, and we had to go home and spend the rest of the day mending our clothes.

At the farm, too, they kept cows and went in for making butter, which was sent in with the waggon when it made its weekly journey to Grahamstown with the rest of the produce. They were feasting on water-melons when I arrived, and large quantities were also sent into town. They were great big things, some almost too large to hold in one's arm, with a smooth, dark green skin and pink inside with dark pips. At first they seem rather tasteless, like a sweet cucumber, but they improve greatly on acquaintance and are very refreshing on a baking hot day. The porcupines liked the water-melons, too, and did a great deal of damage in the 'lands.' We had quite sport one day with the dogs trying to get one out of its hole. We could hear its spikes rustling with anger in the burrow, but we could not induce it to come out, and the dogs came off worse than the porcupine, and returned with their coats all torn and bleeding from the fight.

The prickly-pears were ripe, too, at this time, and I was soon instructed by the children how to eat them, after first having almost killed myself with the little prickles covering the skin. The plants grew everywhere, high and bushy, with their fleshy cactus leaves, and in some places they were used for hedges,

through which the boldest animal would not venture to stray. The prickly-pear is easy to grow, and in some parts of the country it spreads so quickly that it has become a pest; its extermination is of great difficulty. Some farms get quite overgrown, and it is said that the wool of the sheep and goats is spoilt by being pulled and dragged by the thorns. The fruit itself inside the green skin is made up of a whitish, watery pulp, full of innumerable little hard pips, which is rather tasteless, but, like the water-melons, cool and satisfying if one is thirsty. The natives are very fond of them, and they used to come from a long distance to gather them at this farm, which apparently was noted among them for the qualities of its prickly-pears. They would arrive with buckets and baskets of all descriptions on their heads, and take back quantities to their huts, where, I believe, they made a sort of beer of their spoils. We would see them gathering all day long, dressed in their native dress, while their red blankets gave pleasant touches of colour to the gray-green of the bushes. We used lots of prickly-pear, too, up at the house. The children were very fond of them and ate a good many, while the 'boys' chopped up the leaves for the ostriches to eat, for they will swallow anything, and a few prickles are nothing to them.

We had lessons in the morning, and when it got cool in the afternoon we would go off for a walk. I was delighted with all the new ferns and plants I saw. Clumps of maidenhair and rushes grew by the river-side, blue and red lilies, and arum-lilies too. Sometimes we would disturb some guinea-fowl or a buck, and

sometimes in the evening we would hear the monkeys chattering in the distance. Once or twice they inspanned the little cart with two oxen, and we all went for a drive a long way off. On the top of the hills above the bush is a stretch of grass veld, which they call the rand, where there is good pasture for the cattle. Sometimes we went up as high as that, but it was a good pull for the oxen, and as soon as we got to the top we outspanned and let them have a rest, while we made a fire and began 'cooking' the kettle. The air was always cool up there, and we could see a great distance all around. The bush seemed like the sea, with waves spread out beneath us. Near, down below, was the road from Grahamstown to Port Alfred, winding about in the green like a silver snake, and now and again we would watch a waggon slowly crawling along, laden with produce, or else taking a picnic-party down to the sea. The cracks of the whips and the shouts of the boys would come up to us as we sat in the sun lazing away at the top of the rand.

I used to like those walks and rambles very much, but my life wasn't all like that. Far from it. It is easy now to recall the beautiful scenery and the bright sunshine, and to forget all the petty troubles and annoyances, which are so very real and galling at the time they happen. The household was always in a muddle, and I could not help pitying the father and mother all the time.

Their antecedents read like a story. He was colonial-born, and had been sent home to college (a good-looking youth he must have been then, from

his photograph), and there he fell in love as an undergraduate with a good-natured, happy English girl, brought up in the ideal home, where the women amused themselves with accomplishments, and 'cook would not allow them in the kitchen.' Well, he came back to the Cape as a lawyer, but his health broke down, and he took to farming, of which he was absolutely ignorant, and for which he was quite unfitted. She remained faithful to him through it all, and eventually came out and married him, and they settled on the farm together. It ought to have been a romance, but, unfortunately, it wasn't. The result was chaos and children!

It was a warning against love in a cottage. He by his farming could not make both ends meet, and she could neither do the work of the house herself nor make the Kaffir servants do it. She could not get into colonial ways and make the best of it under any circumstances, and life grew more of a burden as the years went on and the children and the chaos increased. When I knew her she had become a very silly woman, and he had become morose, and only woke up now and again, when he indulged in violent fits of anger.

I would come in from school and find the whole house in disorder. In the dining-room were piles of linen from the wash, which the materfamilias was vainly trying to iron, while the two children—next to the baby—lay squalling on the ground. They were tied by the foot to different legs of the table, so were vainly trying to undo themselves or to kick at each other. This was a favourite form of punish-

ment in the family, whose principles forbade corporeal chastisement.

'Oh!' said the mother, turning to me, 'they've been fighting all the morning, and I haven't been able to do anything. I wanted to do this ironing, but look what a lot there is, and it's so hot! I don't know when we shall have dinner!' And then the baby would begin to cry.

Hanging up was the photograph of her mother's drawing-room at home, large and cool, with flowers and every comfort. It seemed to breathe refinement and taste. What a contrast to this!

One of the children was a little dear—a girl, with cropped black hair and large brown eyes. It was just old enough to do pot-hooks and hangers, and loved writing, and if a letter wasn't quite right it would stick its little podgy finger in its mouth and daub it out. In the end the slate got into a horrible mess. It was a fat little thing and healthily naughty. Its fingers were always filthy from poking about, which showed an inquiring turn of mind, and its pinafore was always messy where it stained itself with things it had been told not to eat. When the other children howled, it would calmly look round with its big eyes, as much as to say, 'Why ever have I been born into such a family?' It was a nice infant and good to kiss.

It is strange how children of such different dispositions are found in the same family and with the same surroundings. This little girl had a brother, and he was quite a little beast. There is no other word for it. He had sandy hair, and was pinky all

round his eyes, and had inherited his father's fits of temper. He was only four or five, but we were all his slaves, and he upset the whole house by his screaming. A doctor had once said the child was not to be allowed to have these screaming fits; if so, he didn't know what would happen. I wish doctors wouldn't make such insane remarks; it comes so hard on the teachers and guardians. The consequence was, whatever the boy wanted he screamed for, and we had to give it to him to make him leave off. If he wanted his sister's prickly-pear he had to have it; if he wanted to pull flies' legs off we joyfully allowed him to do so; if he wanted somebody else's go-cart we straightway took care to give it him. We had to humour him in every way because 'we didn't know what might happen.' When he got very bad, and had reduced his mother and us all to a state of nerves, his father used to come to the rescue and take him into the bedroom and pray over him.

Parents are funny people. The more one sees of them, the funnier they seem to get, and governesses have many opportunities for observation. So many books are written now about the training of children; I should like to see one written about the training of parents. The first thing to teach them would be that they are not the only people in the world who have been smart enough to have children; secondly, that although they may themselves be the most wonderful couple in the universe, it does not follow as a matter of course that their children are the most wonderful of children; and there are lots of other things they might learn too. When one teaches, one studies the

parents as well as the children, and then to an outsider like myself the old problems arise, Why do people ever have any children at all? Why do people who can't manage their children always have the most? and Why do people worry their lives out about their children, and yet are fond of them all the while? One can't understand these things.

The house itself was not bad; in fact, it was fairly large for a South African farmhouse, as it had two sitting-rooms, four bedrooms, and the kitchen, which was the haunt of the Kaffir servants. Besides the father and the mother and the children and myself, there was a white girl who helped in the housework and bathed the youngsters, and a man—I believe he was half a Dutchman—who worked on the farm. His room was outside, next to the schoolroom and the store, but he always used to come into the house for meals, and would sit silently at the table, except when he said a word or two to the 'boss' about the farm or the oxen. He was an uncouth, hungry-looking individual, and in the daytime slouched about with his lanky legs and with his hat bent down over his eyes. He was not an appetizing table companion, as he always smelt of the kraal, and I don't think he ever washed. His place, unfortunately, was next to mine. He was a sort of overseer, the only other white man on the farm, and he also worked a lot of the lands 'on the half,' as the custom is; that is, the farmer provides the land, the seed, and the implements, while the other man does the work. In the end the produce is divided. I've for-

gotten his name now, but we will call him Mr. Potts; it is all the same.

'Ach! Mr. Potts is rich,' one of the neighbours said to me. 'Besides what he gets as wages, he has all those lands on the half, and see those sheep—lots of those are his. He's well off now, and he used to be better off still—only drink, you know. His father had a big farm the other side of Port Elizabeth, but he and his brother drank it all up; so he's come down to this. But, my! it's a good thing he's come here! They say he's converted now, and doesn't touch a drop; but I don't know: someone told me that saw him not long ago in Grahamstown . . . Perhaps he hasn't the chance of going into town much.'

But up at the farm he was looked upon as a brand plucked from the burning; also a halo of romance hung around his unkempt, unwashed head. He had been engaged to a girl near by, who afterwards went up to Johannesburg. At first they corresponded every week, and the boss had to read the girl's letter out to Mr. Potts, as Mr. Potts couldn't read himself; and then Mr. Potts would dictate a letter back, which the boss would kindly write out. But all things come to an end at last, and the end was, she jilted him. Doubtless she found someone more up-to-date in the golden city. Mr. Potts—I cannot think how he did it—threatened to kill himself; then he settled down quietly into dirt and melancholy. It was in this state I made his acquaintance, and we never got further than a curt 'Good-morning,' 'Good-evening.' I remember he sat at the supper-table and devoured

everything we passed him silently and rapaciously; then, directly after we had finished, we pushed our chairs back to the wall and had family prayers. Mr. Potts used to pray, and pray earnestly, and sometimes they would ask the Spirit to move the heart of any other stranger within their gates. Then there would be a pause. I knew they meant me, and felt horrible; it was as if the eyes of them all were digging me in the back.

One day someone said to me: 'Don't you know Mr. Potts is going? They can't keep him any longer; it costs too much. But I don't know what will happen on the farm.'

We had a special hymn the evening before he went, and then he gathered his chattels together and was off. 'Poor fellow! he was so sorry to leave,' said the mother of the family.

Two or three evenings afterwards we were going to a prayer-meeting on a neighbouring farm. It was not far off. In the daytime we could see the house well from the stoep, over on the opposite hill, but the footpath led us a long way round. I had been over several times before. I liked to watch them threshing there, which they managed in quite a primitive way. Outside the house on the veld was a large round threshing-floor, where the corn was laid; then all the horses of every description and age were brought from the different parts of the farm and turned into the circle, where they were driven wildly round and round to trample out the grain. But this night it was quite dark; there was no moon, but it was quite calm, which rather added to the weirdness

of it all, especially as the bull-frogs kept making a chorus of croakings in the vlei.

The three of us—the boss, the white girl, and myself—started off with a lantern, treading cautiously and keeping to the footpath. We were rather afraid of the night adders. Once we heard one hiss quite near us, and were thankful we had not stamped on it; if so, it would have been all up with us.

There were several sluits to cross and a small stream, but at last we arrived safely at the house, but with our boots all muddy. Just before we got there a neighbour caught us up. I remember him well, because he was the most handsome man I have seen in my life. He was tall, strong, and finely proportioned, and he carried himself well. He had a straight nose, good chin and good mouth; his complexion was of a rich olive colour, and his eyes were black, real black, and used to glitter out from under his hat. One could imagine him going mad with anger. His hair was straight and black, too, and he had a large black moustache. Many stories were told about him and his antecedents. His father was a white man, who had a farm in the district, and his mother had been a Cape woman, with Indian blood in her veins. This, their son, lived near us, called himself an Englishman in spite of his looks, and came to the prayer-meetings. Well, this individual came up to us.

'Have you heard the news?' he said. 'Potts has come back from Port Elizabeth, and he is having a fine time of it in Grahamstown, there, at the hotel, with two or three of his friends. He is spending everything he has, and last night they were all rolling

about the street tipsy. I know it's true, because——' And he went on.

We were very grieved and quite upset. Fancy the lugubrious, lanky Mr. Potts! Reclaimed drunkards are always the worst.

We all went into the house. It was an old Dutch place and the door opened straight into a large voorkammer, where the family, half Dutch themselves, were assembled. There were a lot of them, and seats were scarce, but I crept to a bed in the corner and sat gingerly on the edge, all the time fearing that I might be catching something, either visible or invisible. The ceiling was low, so the room got very hot and stuffy, and, as there was only one candle, the light was flickering and dim. The people, though, were quite in earnest, and never seemed to think how funny they were. There was no harmonium, so we all began singing in different keys, and finally broke down altogether, and then started a fresh hymn which we knew better. Then came a reading, and afterwards prayers. We were all kneeling down, when suddenly we heard a tremendous noise outside—horses clattering up over the stones, whips cracking, men shouting. Then the door was flung open with a bang, and in came Mr. Potts, mad with drink, together with his lively companions. Afterwards we heard they had hired horses in Grahamstown and had galloped out full tilt to the farm. It was a wonder they had not fallen and killed themselves on the bad roads in the dark. Why they came out I never knew; perhaps they didn't know themselves.

The meeting was upset, such a meeting as Mr. Potts in his regenerate days loved to attend. The last I saw of him was as he stood with eyes excited and bloodshot, waving his lanky arms furiously in the air. Truly, the last state of that man was worse than the first.

But to return to other things. My stay in Albany was short, so I could not continue my explorations very far afield; but I cannot pass on without mentioning the beasts and crawling things which made our physical bodies burdens to us and our faces ugly to behold. It was summer at the time and very hot, so perhaps that made them worse.

To begin with, there were snakes of many varieties, most of them poisonous, always lurking in unexpected corners, so we had to keep a good lookout for fear of the children. They say that there are not as many snakes at the Cape now as there once were, and that they are slowly disappearing before the gradual cultivation of the land and the determined onslaught of the white people. The natives are still superstitiously frightened of them, but the white men won't let a snake escape them; they kill them by hitting them with stones to break their backs, or else by shooting them. Tradition says that, however mortally wounded a snake may be, it never dies until the evening; it will lie and wriggle all the day, but will not succumb till the sun goes down. I don't know if this is really true, and, if so, what the explanation may be.

The python is not generally found east of Natal, but in the colony we had different varieties of cobras,

adders and vipers, and a venomous snake called the ringhals, which will follow you and give chase, throwing its head back and pecking the air. Happily, I have no snake adventure to relate, and personally have had no excitement with one, although they have crawled into the bedrooms when I was in the house, and while I was on this farm in Albany one was shot in the kitchen, accompanied by the screams and yells of the Kaffir servants who looked on. In case of accident, I always bore in mind what I had been told before I landed at the Cape that you must do in case of a snake-bite. It is a very handy thing to know. You must get a knife and scarify the wound, and pour somebody's snake tincture in, of which you ought to carry a bottle with you always. Failing the tincture, you tie up the limb tight with a handkerchief or anything else you may have handy, above the bite, and keep on drinking neat alcohol until the doctor comes. Of course, this last recipe is no good if you're living in a temperance household, as I was, and if you're forty miles away from a doctor, which isn't unlikely.

Then we were pestered indoors with those insects which are wrongly supposed to be peculiar to London, and fleas—fleas everywhere! This is all very nasty to write about, but still more nasty to live among. But it is necessary, I suppose, for hot climates to possess some disadvantages, or else we, living in the cold, might grow too discontented.

Compared with these last, mosquitoes, of course, are quite aristocratic, but I'm afraid you do not feel very aristocratic when you appear at breakfast with

your two eyes bunged up and your eyelids swollen to the size of your fist.

Then there were microscopic insects of red, which covered the veld in swarms, and crawled all over you, when you walked through the grass. Unless you were careful to remove them, which was a difficult task, they would get into your flesh and burrow deep in, making a sore place and causing a great deal of irritation. They were very annoying and a great trial during the summer months to the poor little children, with their bare legs and short sleeves. Happily, in the district I was going to, near Queenstown, there were no such things as these, and the frost in winter prevented us from being pestered by so many noisome beasts.

CHAPTER V

ON A FARM NEAR QUEENSTOWN

IT was at Easter, at the beginning of the winter, that I came up to Queenstown, and I lived two years and more up there on the farm. When you get buried away in the country, time seems as nothing, life passes on in the same monotonous stream: one year, two years, three years, make no difference—they are all the same. So I have no distinct remembrance of the order in which things happened during that time. It is as if there were a background of even content from which certain events stand out clear, but I forget how they come. I never used to know the day of the month, and sometimes not the day of the week, but the children always knew when it was Saturday, because that was a holiday.

The country was different to what it was down Grahamstown way: there was no bush, only grass, large grass flats with ranges of flat-topped mountains running across them; here and there were clumps of mimosa bushes—that was all. After we left the town the road went on over the veld, on and on, with, of course, no hedges or ditches; it seemed as if it would never end. The farm was about fourteen

miles from Queenstown, and we only passed two or three houses on our way. It was much colder up here and fresher, the autumn had begun, so the sun set early, and it was quite dark when we got out of the cart at the farm. It felt quite cheery coming indoors, and they gave me a welcome and asked me how I liked the drive out.

'Very much,' I said, 'only the road was so dreadful. I thought I should have been jolted to death.'

'The road so bad! Why, that's because you aren't accustomed to it. This road is one of the best in the district. It is the highroad from Queenstown to Whittlesea.'

Then I was planted in the parlour and the children were introduced to me. There were four fairly big girls and a boy, who were to be my eldest pupils. They looked at me with curiosity and appeared so good, and we all sat there, while four little imps in pyjamas appeared surreptitiously from somewhere in the bedrooms and likewise gazed upon me. We got to know each other very well, these children and I, during the next two years, and I found out that they were not all quite so pious as they had looked on that first night, and they also doubtless found out that I was not as awe-inspiring as I appeared at the outset.

The next day being Sunday, I had time to unpack my things and to make the acquaintance of my new home. The house and its surroundings were just like the other farmhouses that I had seen; here we had the grandeur of six rooms and a kitchen, all, as usual, on the flat, with a loft on top, covered with a thatched pitched roof. From the stoep a pathway led

down to the walled-in garden and orchard, which was a very appetizing place to us during the fruit season, and we had many a good feast down there. It may be said of the fruit at the Cape that it never rains but it pours; there are many misfortunes that may overtake it, frost, hail, or drought, but when it is a good year there is fruit in abundance. Inside the wall were hedges of figs and pomegranates, quinces, and prickly-pear, and there were quantities of trees, too—apricots, peaches, apples and pears.

In the summer the apricots and peaches came first, and grew in great quantities on trees as apples do at home; but they do not have the fine flavour of ours, so carefully grown on the walls in England. They are soon finished, and later on come the pomegranates, which stain the children's pinafores in big brown patches, and the quinces. We only find quince-trees now at home in old-fashioned gardens, but at the Cape they are largely grown, and make pretty hedges, with their light down-covered leaves and the big yellow fruit. We used them for cooking in all sorts of ways; the natives and the children ate them raw, and in the end I rather got to like them too. I believe the way to eat a quince is to thump it and bang it about well before you begin, because it is a woody fruit, and needs to be bruised well before the juice comes. This is how they told me to do it: You put a kapje on your head and sit on the top of the wall with your quince. You give three or four thumps and bangs, then take a bite; then some more thumps, then another bite, and so on. It takes a long time to eat a quince like that. In fact, with a

young man, you can spend a whole morning in that way. Not that I ever did. There was the wall, there was the quince, there was I, but no young man. Just my luck, I suppose; but doesn't Browning say something about 'Never the time and the place and the loved one together'? So that ought to be some consolation.

There were grapes, too, of course, in the garden, but they were not often a success, for the fowls used to jump up on the vines and eat them before they were ripe. I never knew such fowls as they were in that place; they were quite masters of the situation, and nothing—seeds, vegetables, fruit—was safe from their audacious appetite. They used to rove about where they liked, and some had established a half-wild colony of their own by the fountain. When the sentence went forth that there was a fowl wanted for dinner, there was a great commotion, followed by an exciting chase. The little boys with some small naked Kaffirs in tow would wildly rush after a troop of fowls and try to seize hold of some of them. Round and round the house they went shrieking, until some panting fowl turned faint and gave in, and so was promptly caught. The last scene of the tragedy was when one of the little boys triumphantly held its legs and put its head on the block; then the old Kaffir cook, Sara, with a grin at me, would lift the chopper, and with one sure blow 'its head would be smitten from its bodee.' The children, unfortunately, were no respecters of age: unluckily for us, the old were often slaughtered for the young; but I remembered one of the boys saying to me once with glee:

'Why, we've got a young one this time!' Oh, I did hate those hens, and they knew it, too. I know: for when I was in school in the morning they would hop in at my window and insult me by laying eggs on my bed! Some even wanted to sit there!

Standing on the stoep, we looked over the orchard and the fruit-trees on to the mountain. It was a high one, towering above right in front of the house; at the bottom we could see the Kaffir huts and the big kraal, covered with a zinc roof to keep the goats warm in winter; higher up we could see the goats themselves, climbing about in search of food, and higher up, too, they still were there, but looking like small white patches—so small that a child once came out from town and thought they were mushrooms. It was mostly covered with grass and stones, but just before the summit there was a belt of rock and bush. We had to climb through—a good scramble it was, too—and then we got to the top and could look down on the farm, which seemed so small and far beneath. There were the road from town, the house looking like a doll's-house, the schoolroom, the kraal, the river coming from far away, with the tobacco lands and the huts where the Hottentots lived.

I used to love that mountain, as one gets to love these huge inanimate things of Nature, especially at times when I felt the world was vain and good for nothing; then I wanted to write a poem about it, but, unfortunately, it takes more than good intentions, the vanity of the world, and a mountain to write a poem. It was there in front of us, always the same yet always different. In summer it was green, and

the grass was good for the goats and cattle; then in the winter the frost came and spoilt the grass, and the mountain turned brown and yellow, and all the veld around turned brown and yellow, too—it made you blink in the sun—and the cattle grew thin. And then in spring, before the rains came, they would burn the veld, and in the evening the fires would look like big snakes curling about in the distance, and our own mountain would have great black patches on it, too. Once we went out to burn the mountain, the children and I, but it wasn't so nice or such fun as we expected; we got very black and dirty, the smoke choked us, and my eyelashes got singed. At first the fire wouldn't burn, and then further round it burnt too well, and stupidly got ahead of the wind, so the girls were surrounded by the flames and had to scramble on to a big rock and stay there until the grass around them had burnt out. In the excitement, I remember, they lost a hat and a Prayer-Book; the Prayer-Book was brought to learn a text from for the next day's school, and its loss prompted a beautiful moral of 'doing one thing at a time,' so dear to the heart of a school-missus!

I had never seen tobacco growing before, and they explained all about it to me when I first went. The great place for the tobacco industry at the Cape is in Outshoorn and along the Kat River; but the culture has been now introduced into this district, and very successfully, too. The tobacco lands here were near to the river, so they could be easily watered —and they need a lot of water—by means of the

furrows. The young plants are put out in rows in the spring, and grow up tall with large flat green leaves. When they turn yellow and are sufficiently fit, these leaves are picked and hung up in the tobacco-houses to dry (big places thatched with reeds). Afterwards they are taken down and steeped in 'lye,' and then the best of them are spread out and twisted into roll-tobacco, done into bundles, and are ready to be smoked and sold. The twisting operations used to take place in the store next to the schoolroom, and the fumes came in through the partition and almost overpowered us, and made us feel sick and giddy. Even the people accustomed to the work often find it too much for them, and have to give it up, the scent is so strong. When finished, most of the tobacco was sold, excepting some to give out to the Kaffirs with their rations, and some kept back for use in the house.

The tobacco was all grown and made up by a Hottentot man 'on the half'; but I don't know whether he would deign to call himself a Hottentot, for certainly there was Indian blood in him. His name was Frederick, and some years ago he had come to the farm penniless—in fact, in debt—and now he had got on so well he was quite rich; he had two pairs of cart-horses and a grand cart in which he used to career to Queenstown. Two of his children went to a school in town, his wife had a sewing-machine and other luxuries, while his sons wore the stiffest of starched shirts on Sundays, soused themselves all over with scent, and considered themselves quite 'catches,' which I suppose they were in a way.

Hottentots are great people for show and dress; everything they earn is spent in finery and grandeur. Frederick's menage and his daughter's wardrobe were startling, and his mud house was wonderful, with its chairs and the pictures on the wall; but, alas! he had the thorn in the flesh common to most affluent people—he had poor relations!

The other side of the tobacco lands, higher up the river, there was another hartebeeste house, with other Hottentots, squalid and poor. These were his wife's relations, which perhaps made it more galling still. The ancient father of the family was called Old Boy, and the little house—so low that you had to stoop down a great deal when you went in—was filled with people of all ages and sizes. Some were his children and grandchildren, and some were not; I never could sort them out, and I don't believe they could themselves. Old Boy was a typical Hottentot, very small and shrivelled, with his ugly yellow face. He always had a black handkerchief bandaged tight round his head, with an old felt hat squashed on to the top. His wife was little and old, too, and they both used to sit on the ground outside their hut and watch the chickens run about around them; now and again they would call out to them in their high-pitched, squeaky voices. Sometimes we would be walking past at dusk, and then the whole family would be inside, and we would bend down and look in the door and say 'Good-evening.' Perhaps one of the men would be playing on the concertina—the music of the Hottentots—and the rest would listen, while the children looked round at us with their

beady eyes. A little while before one of these children had died; they asked for an old butter-box, and had had a grand funeral, and had buried him in the veld near by. But there seemed plenty of others left.

Old Boy worked 'on the half,' too, but, unlike his brother-in-law, he never seemed to make his half last out. They never had enough, and could not make both ends meet. They were very improvident. No wonder Frederick's people did not 'know them.' They used to rear lots of poultry for sale, and at one time we saw that they had a good lot of turkeys fit to kill. A few days later we went down to order one for dinner, but, as in 'Alice in Wonderland,' we found they had eaten every one. Old Boy naïvely explained 'they did it because they were hungry.'

I got to know all these people, the Kaffirs, the orchard, the mountain, and all, and soon settled down into school life on a farm, which went on the same day after day. Early in the morning, at sunrise, the servants would come over from the huts and make the coffee, and the first thing I heard was the girl bringing me in a beautiful large cup with a big slice of brown bread and butter. Sometimes I did not even wake at this, and we had one very unsophisticated maiden who would take her fists and bang on me, calling out, 'Wake, missus, wake!' in Cape Dutch. She really quite hurt. Then I would get up, and we would have an hour or two's school before breakfast-time, and then go on again till dinner; then a little rest—lying down, perhaps a little sleeping—then some more coffee. If lessons

were not finished, we finished them ; but they were soon over, and then I could do what I liked all the rest of the day. I read and worked, and often went out riding, or people rode over to see us ; and then in the evening, after the cows had been milked and they had finished with the separator, we would have supper, and afterwards sit out on the stoep in the moonlight, or play cards and amuse ourselves indoors, according to the season ; then early to bed, and the next thing would be, 'Wake, missus, wake!' and it would all begin over again.

Meals were a break in the day, but meals on an African farm cannot be called exciting. They come as no surprise ; there is no joy of anticipation. The general rule is that you eat what you grow, and don't buy anything you can help, which is excellent in theory, but in practice, whether for good or for evil, it does away entirely with the science of gastronomy. I liked the system very much myself, and ever afterwards have thought what a useless amount of consideration, trouble, and expense we spend at home on keeping our bodies alive. On this farm we kept goats ; consequently we ate goat always. Often, going up to the schoolroom in the early morning, I saw one of the boys skinning a slaughtered goat, and I knew we should have the heart and liver for breakfast. We had a joint for dinner, the head and feet for supper, and so we worked through the whole animal. When that was done we began another. In the autumn all the cattle were collected and driven down from the veld. Then it became a question of the survival of the fittest. The unfit seemed generally at the same

time to be the most ancient, and these were led to the slaughter, or, rather, they were shot, and all the children rejoiced at the idea of having 'cow's meat.' Then there was a grand salting of beef, and we systematically began devouring the beasts as we had done the goats. That was our meat, except sometimes when we had fowls, or now and again during the winter we had venison, when they shot a buck on the mountains. To eat lamb is wicked, veal sacrilege.

One day at breakfast we were having some fry, and I said:

'Why don't you ever have the sweetbread cooked?'

'What's that?' they said.

'Well, something that comes out of sheep,' I said, 'I suppose goats are the same.'

'Oh, this is all we eat. The servants have all the rest of the inside.'

'What a pity! sweetbread is so nice.'

'What funny things you people at home do eat! But we don't know what it is. You must ask Sara; she will cook it for you. What is the Dutch or the Kaffir for it? What does it look like? Next time Jacob kills a goat you must go and show it to her.'

I said it was no good my inspecting the goat, for I had only seen sweetbreads cooked, and then they looked round, with breadcrumbs on the top. But I was not to be denied, so accordingly I entered into a contract with Sara to waive her rights to the sweetbread in consideration of a pair of old boots or an old skirt. But, alas! for the first two or three times she sent me in different things of the most nauseous

description as experiments, and it was only after patience and perseverance we at last discovered what the sweetbread was, and henceforth it was called the 'school-missus' meat,' and was considered my monopoly.

So much for our meat, which was wholesome, but, as I said, unexciting and generally tough. For vegetables or anything of the green tribe we were badly off, owing to the scarcity of water. Potatoes, also, are by no means an every-day dish, as with us, and their place is taken by rice, pumpkins, and mealies—always mealies. This is the general food of the natives, and they eat very little besides. At the farmhouses they are seen at every mid-day meal, and are generally just plainly boiled, after having had the outer skin bruised off by stamping. Another way of eating mealies is to get them when they are quite green, and boil them on the cob. They are very nice then, but the eating them is the difficulty. You take up the cob in one hand and spread on butter, then put pepper and salt, and then you gnaw at it as you would —or, rather, would not—gnaw at a bone. They are delicious like that, though one always feels somewhat of a horse or a pig ; but one must not say so. They tell a tale of a 'rooinek,' as they say, whose name is still distasteful to the people, and among other uncomplimentary things he is reported to have said is the following: He was honouring with his presence a farmer, whose wife had got together as enticing a dinner as she could under the circumstances. One of the items of the menu was naturally mealies, of which he was asked to partake.

'Bah!' he said, 'mealies! maize! We give that to horses in England. Horses' food!' and he soon turned round to read the papers he had brought to amuse himself among such unenlightened company. They never forgot this; it was an insult to their national dish. The words still rankled in their breast, and were told to me in anger. Out at the farms not many strangers come, and the same old tales are remembered, and come up again and again.

And pumpkins, too! We had pumpkin all the year round, and they said the Boer children got yellow from eating so many. They grew in the lands with the water-melons, and in the summer, when they got ripe, some were sent into town in waggon-loads to be sold, and the rest were stored outside in the sun on top of the zinc roof, and lasted till pumpkins came again.

Naturally, in the country one would have expected a constant supply of milk and butter; but blessed is he that expecteth nothing, especially in South Africa. During the summer we literally revelled in butter—sometimes they sent 100 pounds a week away to Kimberley; but when the winter came, and feed was scarce and the cattle were thin, there was a sad falling off. Then in town the price of butter was very high, and on some farms they had absolutely none for three or four months of the year. At this place where I was they managed better, and always made a little every week, but not enough for everybody. The children had to eat lard, or sometimes dripping, with their bread, and gazed at us with

envious eyes. We, their elders and betters, were supposed to have borne the yoke in our youth, and to be entitled to the luxury of continual butter as a reward.

The nicest thing to eat, or rather to drink, on the farm was the coffee. That was delicious. Not like the stuff they say you get at the Dutch houses, where they put the coffee in the kettle on the Monday, and the grounds are repeatedly dosed throughout the week. Oh no! Old Sara roasted ours almost every afternoon in the kitchen, and it smelt nice, and it tasted nice, too, having been freshly roasted and ground. So that was what we had mostly to eat: goats' flesh, mealies, rice, butter, brown bread, almost black, which was made from the corn grown on the place. Not much variety, but plain and wholesome. It suited me well, and I almost wished we could go back to the same old style in England. But, still, it is a comfort nowadays, when we are bent on saving ourselves trouble and are ruining our digestions with things out of tins, to feel there are a few spots still on the earth where you can get wholesome, unadulterated food straight from the earth as God gives it to you.

As I have said, our lives were as simple as our food.

Riding was our chief amusement, and I was lucky in always having something to ride. Besides the cart-horses and the others, there were two ponies, and one of the girls and myself would often go off on them in the afternoon to call on some of the neighbours on some of the farms near by. Everyone that we went to see was most hospitable, but that

is so everywhere at the Cape; stranger or no stranger, they take you in and give you a welcome.

There is no poor law in the colony, nor are there any workhouses; a man may tramp from one end of the country to the other, and be certain of getting food and lodging on the way. This astonished me at first, but the people at the farm treated it as a matter of course, and thought us folks at home most hard-hearted in not giving to every beggar we saw. There were not so many tramps past this house now as there had been once in the old Kimberley days; the roads had changed their course, but now and again an old broken-down man would come by with a bundle on his back, and they used to give him some supper, and make him a bed on the floor in a corner of the schoolroom, telling him he must be up by half-past six or whatever time we were beginning lessons. But he had always gone; they generally tramp off again at sunrise. I often said it would be interesting to write down the stories of these men, most of them ugly and bent and sad, who wander in from the distance and go off into the distance again. Lonely, old, and broken-down, they must have some history belonging to them; but if you asked them, they would never tell the truth about themselves, and I suppose drink is at the bottom of it all.

It is not only to the tramps that this hospitality is shown, but to any stranger or traveller that is passing along the way. The distances between the towns are great, and the accommodation houses few

and far between; often travellers are dependent for their meals or their night's lodging on the hospitality of a farmer on the road. Their horses are tired, they drive up to the door, the farmer comes out.

'Good-day!' he says, in English or Dutch as the case may be.

'Good-day!'

They shake hands.

'Will you outspan?'

'Yes, please.'

'Have you had breakfast?'

When they have outspanned and are eating their breakfast, the guests will inform the host who they are and where they are going. It doesn't matter before then. On the other hand, no extra preparation is made for them; what the family are eating they eat, and are thankful for, and when they have finished and have had a rest, they say 'Good-bye,' and are off again. It is all in the day's work.

Of course, the number of such visitors to a farm quite depends on its situation. On most of them a stranger is a rarity, and is treated as a welcome bringer of news from the outside world; but with others it is different. I have a friend whose father's house is midway on the highroad between two small towns, and, as they are very hospitable folk, they generally have a houseful of staying visitors besides those passing along the way. When I was up there once my friend was telling me about the different people that had sometimes come; some were interesting, many the reverse. One day a young Englishman came to the farm (when they want to tell a

story against a man, he is almost always an Englishman—a rooinek—who doesn't know the country, but thinks he does, and who can't ride—a heinous offence). Well, it was winter and dark when the young man came, and he walked straight in, sat by the fire, and made himself at home. At supper he asked for everything he wanted, and talked condescendingly to the others. Soon after he got up and said he would go to bed, and wanted to know if his room was ready, and, turning to the master of the house, he said:

'Oh, well, I think I'll settle up with you to-night before I go to bed.'

'Settle up! What for?'

'Well, well——' And then, looking round, he felt he had made a deadly mistake. 'Isn't this an accommodation house?' he gasped.

'No, certainly not. This is my farm here, and this is my house. I am not an inn-keeper!'

'But——' The young man was overcome. Everyone felt uncomfortable for him. 'Some remuneration——'

'Oh no! I never have taken money for anything like that, and I never shall.'

The poor youth was too dumbstruck to say anything or to try and apologize. He crept away to his room, but before anyone was about in the morning he had inspanned and disappeared.

So, also, in the country is visiting carried on in a much more free-and-easy way between friends and relatives than it is at home, and in a much more hearty and sincere manner. Out there at the farms,

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they will invite themselves to spend weeks and weeks at each other's houses, which seem for purposes of entertaining to be elastic, the parlour floor making an excellent sleeping-place if the beds are overflowing. The more the merrier, never mind the discomfort! Visits are often paid on the spur of the moment; it doesn't matter.

It might be like this: The husband would say at breakfast: 'I must go over to Cousin John's to-day to see those cattle.'

The wife: 'To Cousin John's! But you must stay there the night. You can't drive there and back in a day. I haven't seen Cousin Annie for a long time. I think I'll go, too, and take Johnnie and the baby. But why didn't we start before? The sun is so hot and the horses away on the veld. It will be two hours yet before they can catch them and inspan. Send Tom after them while I get ready. Here, Sannie! I must take the nurse-girl with me to look after baby. Well, Katie? What, my girl, do you want to go, too, to see Cousin Annie? Don't cry. I'll take Katie, too. Go to Sannie; she'll put you on a clean kapje. And Willie? You want to see Cousin Annie, too? No, you must stay at home. Well, what do you say? My! that boy's a smart child! You want to play with Arthur? Oh, well, then, I must take him, too. Tell Jacob to clean your boots—your best ones. No, I can't take you, Harry. You others must stay at home, and I'll give you each a tikky if you're good children. No, Harry, be a good boy. You must play you're father, and look after the place, see! Don't let the Kaffirs

steal the tobacco. There's an orange you may have in the cupboard. . . .'

And the whole house is in commotion till at last they are off—all packed in a big cart, with a big white hood to keep the sun off—the father and the mother and the children, and the baby and the nurse-girl stuffed in too. They wave and say, 'So long, so long!' They are pleased at the prospect of seeing Cousin Annie, and Cousin Annie will be pleased to see them, although very likely she is busy dress-making, ironing, or what not; perhaps she is turning out the parlour, and all the furniture will be residing on the stoep. But they are sure of a welcome, anyhow.

The other day I went to see a lady from the Queenstown district who had settled in London, and I asked her, naturally, how she liked England.

'Oh, I don't think I shall ever like it,' she said. 'At least, I like London, but not the people. I suppose they are very nice when you know them, but they seem stiff, so difficult to get on with, and I believe they think, too, that I am funny and strange. Do you know, I've been living here two years now, and I know a lot of people, but there isn't one person with whom I'm friendly enough to go in the morning and take the children and my work, and say I've come to spend the day with her. I think it must be my fault.'

I tried to comfort her by saying that, though I was English and was the proud possessor of a hundred or so acquaintances and of half a hundred relatives, that was a height of intimacy to which I

even should not dare to venture. Unlike up-country at the Cape, we in England have a chilling respect for our neighbours' belongings, and are vaguely suspicious as to the depth of their hospitality; neither do we use other people's houses as if they were our own, nor make ourselves at home there. We are so prim and proper and respectable. Our ways are so different to theirs at the Cape.

CHAPTER VI

IN SCHOOL AND OUT

PERHAPS, as I was a teacher, it would not be out of place to say something of the schoolroom, and the pupils, and the holidays, and of things connected with my work. The school was under Government control, coming under the class of Private Farm Schools, and receiving a grant, and as such we were bound to work within certain rules and regulations. The Government is very eager to encourage education, and any farmer may start one of these schools on his farm provided he gets an attendance of no less than five children, who may all belong to his own family or be collected from the neighbours round about. The pupils must be taught according to Government standards, very similar to those laid down by the Education Department at home. They have lessons for a regular number of hours a day—five—with a whole holiday on Saturdays; they have certain holidays fixed for them, and are allowed no more; an inspector comes round regularly every year to examine the children and to inquire into the condition of the school. At least, he did this when I was at the Cape, and there were great preparations

for his coming; but I believe all that is altered now, and the inspector swoops down whenever the spirit moves him to do so—a better plan in the interests of education, but not so nice, naturally, for the teacher or the pupils. As there is a Government grant, it allows these teachers on the farm schools to receive a higher salary than they otherwise would do, and, also, being in a way Government servants gives them a certain position, especially as they get a pension after so many years of service.

In former times teaching used to be undertaken in a very haphazard way, owing to the lack of competent teachers in the out-of-the-way parts. It was the refuge of the destitute, besides being the occupation of any girl in need of a little change or pocket-money; any unfortunate old maid who had been forsaken by friends, money and health would be sure to find employment in that way; any broken-down old man could become a tutor on a farm. But that also is changing very much now; the Government people are getting more particular as to the class employed on the farm schools, and an extra grant is given to those teachers who hold a Cape teacher's certificate.

Our schoolroom was away from the house in the same one-storied building that contained the dairy and the store, so that always in the morning we could hear the milk-separator whirring through the wall, and at times the fumes of the tobacco would come to us when the Hottentots were sitting twisting in the store. In the wall opposite was a window which looked out into a covered kraal, where the

goats and kids were kept in the spring time. Woe be to us then if we left the window open! The kids were so mischievous; they would hop everywhere, and seemed to devour everything they came across. If a time-table was lost, or a paper was not to be found, it was always, 'The goats have eaten it!' Of course, it was a delightful excuse, whether they had done it or not; but I must own the animals also showed their impartiality by chewing up our handkerchiefs or anything that had been carelessly left out to dry.

The schoolroom inside was rather a long room and narrow, with a long narrow table in the middle, and with forms for the children. The four girls sat one side, and the four boys on the other, and I sat at the end, and was honoured with a chair. The floor was, as usual, a mud floor, which was smeared every Saturday to clean it in the Kaffir way, which I thought a very unclean way at first. Hanging on walls were the bookshelf and the maps, and nailed up in a conspicuous place was the school almanac, a very important thing, as it told us what holidays the Government allowed us, and when.

There was about six or seven weeks' vacation in the middle of the summer, at Christmas, about a month in the winter, and then a week at Easter and a week at Michaelmas. Besides that there were a few stray holidays, but not the same as English Bank Holidays. I know we always had Ascension Day for one; and then there was Arbour Day, a local holiday —one, indeed, only meant for the children in Queenstown; but it is a pretty custom, so I will mention it. On this day the children from the different schools

all meet and march together in procession to some part of the town, where they each plant a tree, which they are supposed to water and look after until the tree is old enough to look after itself. Thus in Queenstown many groves have been planted, which not only are of great ornament to the place, but also serve as a protection from the dust-storms which blow in over the bare veld. It is thought, too, that they attract the rain, a thing badly needed in this dry country.

Among my pupils, it was curious that all four girls were older than the four boys, and I must say that the girls were much the quicker at their lessons. Their mother used to moan over the fact, I think. She used to say to me:

'Dear me! I shouldn't mind if it was the girls who couldn't learn. The boys, you see, have to get on in the world. It doesn't matter for the girls if they have brains or not.'

In theory I could not quite agree with her; it did seem hard that the poor girls should not be allowed to keep what few brains they possessed! But after considering the position of women at the Cape, and that their whole duties seemed to consist of marrying, housekeeping, and cooking, I could not help thinking she had common-sense on her side. But, well, there it was: the girls had the brains, and the boys hadn't, and it wasn't any good bothering about it.

The girls—at least, two of them—were quite up to the average for their age, and they all worked up for examinations similar to our Oxford and Cambridge Locals at home.

'I think I'll let them all go out governessing in turn, when they have finished their education,' said the mother to me. 'It will give them experience, and they'll see more of the world and earn some money besides.'

Which I thought was a very wise thing; it is not at all unusual for the daughters on a farm to go for a change and teach on other farms round about.

One of the girls said she would never teach, but she wouldn't mind cooking or keeping house; she liked that. And she could do it well, too, I know. I often wished I could make the butter, or iron a blouse, or bake a cake, as nicely as she could.

And the youngest one also did not feel inclined for teaching at all; she was lazy, I'm afraid, and had great ideas, as we all had in our time, of what she would do when 'she was grown up, and able to do as she liked.'

'I hate lessons!' she used to say. 'I don't see why people should learn anything. As soon as I leave school, I shan't read another book, except the newspaper. And then I shall only look at the Births, Deaths, and Marriages!'

But in spite of lessons, I think she enjoyed herself in the present fairly well; she was always running about with hair in different stages of untidiness, and once, in reference to longer frocks, she said to me: 'But don't you ever wish to be young again?' I was twenty-two at the time, but that made me feel two hundred.

With the little boys the lessons were, of course, much more rudimentary. They were only at the

reading, writing, and arithmetic stage, and they had absolutely no desire to get on further. Until one begins to teach, one has no idea of the scanty amount of general knowledge possessed by the children on these farms as compared with the ordinary gutter children, one might almost say, in England. But it is quite natural. The farm to them is the world; outside is the unknown. They can tell you all about the Kaffirs, and the oxen, and the mountains, and on your side it is very difficult to explain to them about the sea, the snow falling, trains, large towns, and people, and things they have never seen and of which they can form no idea.

I once told the little ones that London was far, far bigger than Queenstown, and I remember they looked at me, but they didn't believe me. To them Queenstown was the metropolis, and you could get beautiful things there in the shape of sweets and knives, and thither came occasionally a wonderful circus, with a real bear and a real zebra. There could be no bigger place. It was their great treat to go into town, and with beaming face they would rush up and say, 'May I have a holiday to-day, please? Father is going to town, and wants me to open the gates for him.' They never pretended to like lessons; they saw no good in them whatever, and I must say in my heart of hearts I sympathized with them, and could enter into their feelings. It did seem stupid for them to sit in clothes, and have to be washed, and learn to read, while outside the little natives ran about naked and enjoyed themselves all day long, as they herded the cattle or sat and played with the toy oxen and

horses they made for themselves out of clay. They spoke queer English, these little children, and put things backwards, in the Kaffir way, and now and again a Dutch word would be thrown in too. Sometimes in school, failing English altogether, they would betake themselves to Kaffir, and then they would think me very funny not to understand.

Besides the children in school, there were two little baby girls, so we were a large household altogether, and the little ones especially were most amusing and entertaining. People always say boys will be boys (which generally means little demons), but one here was the naughtiest I have ever seen. Not like the little fellow down in Albany; his was fits of temper and screaming, but Stewart's was pure mischief.

He seemed to have an ingenuity for mischief. He was up to any naughtiness going, and I'm afraid an account of his misdeeds would fill a whole book. He had brains, I believe, and was a bright, sharp boy, but, alas! he spent all his ideas on play, and not on learning. I think Frederick the Hottentot's boys knew more than he did. But he didn't mind; he sought to conquer other worlds. Once, when he was quite little, I heard that he had put the kitten in the churn and churned it. He had seen them put the cream in and the butter come out, so he wondered what the kitten would turn to if he kept twisting it round in the churn.

Once, too, in order to keep the pair quiet, he and his brother were sent into the parlour to amuse themselves, and they played at sticking away (hiding) an

egg. One shut his eyes, while the other hid the egg, and then the first one looked for it. Stewart was determined his egg should not be found, so he got his father's big best book, put the egg between the leaves, and sat down on it. There are lots of other naughty things I could tell you about, but that is enough, especially as he got no better, despite all the whackings his father gave him. Oh, that child! He had the hide of a rhinoceros and a brain like a brick wall!

But he had a good heart, and, after all, that is the best thing one can have in this world—far better than possessing brains and a tender skin—and I hope he will go on cultivating that, if nothing else. He was very fond of his little sisters, and good to them, and he was generous too. He used sometimes to tap at my door and present me with quinces and pomegranates he had brought up from the garden. Sometimes, too, after a visit to town, he would come in mysteriously and give me some sticky sweets, which he would produce from a still stickier pocket. Once he brought me in as a great prize a dreadful sugar fish he had bought in Queenstown. It was a big thing, and looked very chalky, and had red scales painted on it. But it was considered a grand gift, and as such I accepted it; but, thinking of my digestion, I said it would be a tremendous pity to eat such a wonderful thing, and hung it up on my wall as an ornament and a curiosity. There it stayed for a long time, till, in the summer, it got covered with dust and grew very flabby, and when you took it up its tail would flop about. But to the end the little

children would come and admiringly look at it, while they yearned to eat it themselves, and wondered at my marvellous powers of resistance.

Stewart, among other things, loved to take off his boots and stockings and go barefoot, and one day from the stoep we saw the ridiculous sight of a little Kaffir boy scampering over to the huts with nothing on but boots. Of course they were Stewart's, who had once and for all solved the problem of boots and stockings by giving them away. He would have liked to have run about like a wild child if he could, and never would have washed at all. It is funny how most boys—and mad dogs, too, they say —seem to have a horror of water, and being washed was to these youngsters their daily trial. In the evening I would be sitting in my room, and often would hear a tremendous uproar going on outside—a scuffle with the nurse-girl, bangs and shrieks and kicks, and then a young voice calling out, 'Oh no, Moorkis, no! I shan't! Mother! mother! don't let her! Mother! tell her it isn't my turn to bath to-night!' To them a bath was as awful an ordeal as to any casual ward tramp at home; but, with strange inconsistency, they would sneak off by themselves and bathe—a forbidden treat—down in the river, or else in a filthy dam near the orchard, which was full of frogs and tortoises and crawling things.

The only time that the little children were quiet all together was when their mother or the girls or myself would sit and tell them tales. They loved them, as all children do, and loved those best that they knew well by heart. They always showed their

appreciation by saying at the end, 'Now begin and tell it all over again,' and would know at once if you made the slightest slip. I had some penny fairy-tale books with pictures which they simply revelled in, and their favourite story was the one about 'The Wolf and the Three Little Pigs.' There was something in it which appealed to them very much. Had they not all little pigs of their own, and could they not imagine the wolf as one of the jackals that came down from the mountains?

They liked Bible stories, too, but especially they loved Lot's wife, 'that woman what turned into a pillow of salt.' It was always 'pillow'; that was a fixed idea, you couldn't root it out of their heads. They couldn't understand what a pillar was, but they knew all about pillows: they threw them at each other. So 'pillow' it was to the end of my reign, and I dare say it would have been all the same to Lot's wife. I was not responsible for the theological doctrines of the little children, but, nevertheless, these were clear and well defined. They knew when they died they would go to heaven, grow wings, and eat manna; but it was rather awkward when they wanted me to tell them how manna tasted. They were great on prayers, these children, and had much faith, fully believing that whatever they asked would come to pass. When the long drought was, every night they prayed for rain, and when it came at last they quite thought that they had brought it; and so with everything else on the farm—it was sure to be remembered. They would pray for all kinds of things: their sheep, their horses, for holidays, treats, new

toys, anything that came into their heads to want. They had all some interest in the animals on the farm ; for, as the custom is, they had each been given a cow or a horse or a goat, and perhaps more, when they were quite babies, and these animals increased in number as time went on. Some of the children were already quite rich in stock, while others had had ill-luck and lost theirs from sickness, accident, and one thing and another. The animals were all named, and were very dear to the hearts of the little ones, and consequently figured largely in their prayers. Sometimes, however, the requests were not unanimous, and the children would begin to pray against each other. That was when they had had a quarrel.

Stewart would say, kneeling at his side of the bed, 'Pray, God, let Ronald's horse die!'

And Ronald would angrily reply with, 'Pray, God, let Stewart's cattle get the lung-sick.'

'No, Ronald, no!'—from Stewart quickly.

'Yes, yes!' returned Ronald vehemently.

Then would follow a smack over the bed, and then another back in return, and a fight would begin, which lasted till the combatants were separated and pulled off the bed, and induced to continue their devotions in peace and quiet.

But after all this I must, in common fairness, tell a tale which rather goes against myself. Once after some corporal correction in school that day, my youthful pupils—to the horror of myself and the parents—unanimously prayed that I, their unrespected teacher, might die! They doubtless thought on my decease they would escape the sorrow of any further

learning and its attendant stripes. But, unfortunately for their faith, I did not depart this life—nor even from the farm, until long after—and the lessons went on as usual, and the stripes.

Ah, these were funny children! And I'm afraid I've been chattering about them too much. But I like to think of them now, and to remember their quaint sayings and ways: in spite of their naughtiness and their stupidity, I was fond of them all. They seem more Nature's children than ours at home; out there Nature is to them a beloved and beautiful thing, and for them life, as it unfolds, daily reveals new wonders and new joys. It is nice to think there are yet children on the earth's surface who are really childlike and are not acquainted with everything, who are not already old before they are young, and who at eight do not know more than their grandfathers do at eighty. Our children in England learn too much, they are blasé before life begins; and when I hear talk of infant prodigies I am disgusted, and look back with joy to those youngsters at the Cape, with their grubby hands and their natural greed for something good to eat, who couldn't spell 'intellectuality' to save their lives.

As down in Albany, we would sometimes all go out for a day's picnic on the veld. We would start off in a herd on some fine Saturday morning, and not come back till the sun set. There were the children with the provisions, and myself, then the two baby girls and the nurse-girl, with a little Kaffir or so in tow—quite a procession. We all enjoyed these picnics, and we generally had one to mark some

extra festivity in the family, such as a birthday, and, as we were a fairly large household, birthdays seemed to come round pretty frequently. There was always a cake for the occasion, a grand rich one with white sugar on the top—a regular birthday cake—and with this safely wrapped up in a basket, and carried on in front on a Kaffir girl's head, we felt indeed we were bound for a festivity. The grand cake, though, was not always unalloyed happiness. I remember once, at the close of one of these eventful expeditions, I found the hero of the day in tears. He was holding his little self, and seemed very sad, and in answer to my questions replied mournfully 'he thought he'd eaten too much picnic.'

The elder girls and myself would take our books or work and encamp quietly for the whole day, varied now and again by the excitement of preparing the food, and by scrambles on the mountain. However much we scrambled, we were not able to obtain many spoils; it is a bare country round Queenstown, grass veld, stones, mountains and kopjes, and there are very few flowers to be got at any season of the year. There were the little yellow flowers on the mimosa bushes and the red tufts on the aloes, and a few ferns underneath the rocks or the krantzes—that was about all. And then we got tired and were glad of a rest again at the bottom of the mountain, and sometimes in the summer, after it got cool, the girls would go and bathe in the river, which they were very fond of doing, while I guarded their clothes on the bank and the Kaffir girl 'cooked' the coffee.

It was a fascinating little river, and I liked to sit

and watch it while the children splashed about in the water. It came from somewhere far away, I think, flowing along the veld, in parts between high and rocky banks which it had hollowed out for itself in ages gone by. Here it was deep, here it was shallow; here it ran quickly, here slowly, according to the boulders which barred its way; sometimes it was 'down,' sometimes it was low, depending on the rains up-stream, useless always for boating, as are most South African rivers. Here, where the children bathed, there were large rocks, forming a pool where the water collected. On one side rose up the mountains, steep; on the other stretched the flat veld. A few willow-trees grew on the banks, and further on there was a small kloof between the mountains, with a clump of mimosas and of bread-fruit trees. It was quite pretty down there, and I would look up at the hills above, and then would watch the children again and the water, which went bubbling along between the rocks, until further down it got to a bend in the river where a Dutchman some time since had tried to make a dam. The stones he had put across were still there, and as the water rushed over them it made a sort of waterfall, and then on again it went at the foot of the mountains. One could trace its course winding away by the willows and reeds along the banks.

And I sat and thought till the sun was almost down, and it grew cold in the shadow, and the girls had to come out of the water. Then we would drink the coffee, and afterwards collect the children and the chattels, and the nurse-girl would lug hold

of the little ones and we would go home. The children would sing sometimes, and would carry back the kettle and the pots on their heads in the native way, as they had learnt to do when they were quite small. When we passed the Hottentot house, they would call out greetings to us, and we to them, and we could hear the Kaffirs laughing over at their huts. It would be almost dark by the time we got back to the house, and the cows would have come down to be milked.

So passed the school-days and the Saturdays, and the Sundays were spent in much the same quiet way, only then we did nothing absolutely but rest and doze. We were too far off to go in to church or to attend any other place of worship. Our nearest Bethels were in Queenstown and Whittlesea, both some distance off, and we were halfway between the two. These were our nearest towns, though Whittlesea would, to our way of thinking, be hardly more than a village; but I must mention it, as I often have been there for the week-end, and it reminds me of holidays.

Although I say it was only a village, yet it was quite a centre of civilization; there were several stores, two 'hotels,' a church and a rival chapel, a post-office, a doctor, and two streets of houses standing in big gardens, so that was something. But nothing to be compared to Queenstown, where you had a station and the railway. To Whittlesea there is only a post-cart once a week, which brings out the letters and whatever passengers there may be. But even Whittlesea has a history; it was quite an important place

during one of the natives' wars, when the Kaffirs attacked it and it was gallantly defended: it was bigger than Queenstown. But the railway came and, sorrowful to relate, it never passed near; Whittlesea was left, and the days of its glory departed.

We had friends living beyond the village, at whose house we used now and again to stay for the Sunday. We would start off riding early on Saturday morning before the sun got powerful, with our luggage done up in bundles and fastened on to the side of our saddles. It was tempting to leave the track and gallop along over the veld; but that is too dangerous because of the spring-hare holes and ant-heaps, some of which are not large enough to be noticed in the tufts of grass. Sometimes we had to stop and open a gate between two farms, and sometimes had a river to cross—at a drift—but the horses were all accustomed to that and didn't mind; and then, after going through Whittlesea and the mission-station at Shiloh, riding up through the bushes, we came on the house, standing among the thorn-trees. We rode straight up to the front-door, where there was a large, cool, covered stoep, with little projecting rooms on either side in true colonial style; it looked very inviting after our hot ride.

It was a household managed in the real old-fashioned manner, where the master was everything and the wife was nowhere. But the funny part was, he was little and his wife was large; but it was truly delightful, in these days of new women, to find at least one man who still upheld the authority of his sex. He had many fads, and everything was carried on with great regularity. Among other things, he

would always have his clocks set for sun-time as in the old days, and we had to make great calculations, for almost everywhere now they go by rail-time. Punctuality was a strong point of his, but with him it was almost a virtue turned into a vice; one o'clock was dinner-time, and at one o'clock punctually he would sit down at the table, whether his dinner was ready or not, or whatever accident might have happened in the domestic arrangements. It was the same with breakfast and supper. It was always the same formula, too, to visitors before he sat down; I can see him now turning round and saying: 'Excuse me, I never wear a coat.' Then he would shuffle at his sleeves, and sit down in his gray flannel shirt; it was like that even in winter. But I liked his funny ways, and, owing to their kindness and hospitality, it was always a treat for us to go over to that farm. An eccentric man is always a pleasure to meet with (not to live with; that is different), and *I* especially ought to like him, as he paid me, as a teacher, one of the greatest compliments I have ever had in my life. He said he would like to have old Hicks come over and teach his children, which, knowing from whence it came, I thought was very nice.

It was one Saturday afternoon, when we were staying at this farm, that I visited the mission-station of Shiloh, through which we passed on our way from Whittlesea. It was a settlement of the Moravian missionaries, founded about 1828 in connection with that at Grenadendal, where, more than fifty years before, George Schmidt had first preached the Gospel to the natives, and had met with such scant

courtesy from the Dutchmen of that day. These Shiloh missionaries are quite strangers in a strange land; most of them know neither English nor Dutch, but learn to talk to the Kaffirs in the native tongue. They have made a pretty village here; there are the church, the school, their own clean, shady little houses, the store where they trade with the natives, and the mill they have built by the river to grind the corn. Some of them, years ago, planted oak-trees, in memory, perhaps, of those that grew in the Father-land, and these now make a large oak-grove, an uncommon sight in these parts, which shades the church and the houses, and the graveyard filled with gravestones bearing German inscriptions and strange forgotten German names. The village besides consists of huts where hundreds of natives have made their homes; most of them are very neat and well built, and some are quite grand, with real windows and real doors, through which the little black children rush out and gaze at you as you canter down the street. Around is the wide stretch of veld which has been granted to the mission, and is used as the common ground where the natives can pasture their cattle and make lands to grow their mealies. In addition to following their natural pursuits, they are also taught lessons and handicrafts, but in return for all these blessings they always are obliged to wear European clothes, and the men may only have one wife; but as there is no question yet about 'odd' Kaffir women, it is open to doubt if they keep to this last rule very well. I was surprised, after the farm, to see all the little tiny children running about in shirts, and shirts

only, and I thought they looked much nicer without anything on at all. On Sunday the costumes of the ladies are a sight to behold. I saw them once coming out of church: turbans of all colours, coat and skirts, gorgeous dresses with trains, and finally, as a crowning mark of gentility, boots!

One cannot help thinking that these Moravian missionaries lead very simple, self-sacrificing lives. The women are often sent abroad when quite young, and are often married, without any choice in the matter, to a man with whom they have had no previous acquaintance. They rarely or never go home themselves; their children are taken from them quite young and sent to Germany to be educated by the institution and trained for missionary work. The parents never see them again till they are quite grown up, and perhaps not even then, for they may very probably be sent off to some other far part of the world to begin their labours.

This Shiloh mission was the nearest one we had to the farm, but there were others not far away, in the Transkei, over in Kaffirland; in fact, as has been said of the East End of London, Kaffirland is riddled with missions from different societies, so that the natives of the Reserve may, in addition to the privilege of miscellaneous religious instruction, enjoy the benefits of education and civilization. That this should be so is excellent (in theory); but, as everybody knows, opinions are very much divided as to the amount of good, if any, that the missionaries do among the natives. The solid fact, though, remains that no one at the Cape on the farms, however great a Christian

he may be, will employ a mission Kaffir if he can help it. The general idea is everywhere that they lie more, steal more, and are generally more underhand and difficult to manage, than are the 'raw' natives, as they are called.

About missionaries themselves much has been said, but what with a quantity of over-sentiment about them on the one side, and a great deal of prejudice on the other, it is hard to come to any fair conclusion. Fate once set me down next door to a missionary. He handed me some food, and we began talking. Following the Apostle's advice of being all things to all men, I said: 'Oh, so you took the boat at Zanzibar? I've been there. A lovely place! And we went for such a charming drive over to the other side of the island, to a mission-school. Of course you know it? It is a nice place, with the garden, and the palm-trees, and the plantains. So tropical! And the children there seemed so sensibly brought up. We saw a llthe little girls sitting sewing in pink cotton dresses. And the lady who showed us round was so pleasant, and the chaplain——'

I stopped, for I noticed that my companion's face was getting longer and longer, and his back was getting straighter. Then he said, in a superior way:

'I know the place you mean, though I cannot say I have ever been there. I have heard of it. I believe some of their practices there are most peculiar—quite ritualistic. It has nothing whatever to do with *our* society.'

And I had tried to be nice! I don't understand missionaries.

CHAPTER VII

IN QUEENSTOWN

YOU can understand, when we are stranded away in the country, inaccessible to daily post and daily paper, and instead of these luxuries have to be content with occasional letters and the gossip of passers-by, how much we think of the town whence even these makeshift blessings flow. Queenstown was our town, a connecting link between us and the great wide world beyond, through which the news of Europe tardily reached us, and the fashions and thoughts of the day gradually filtered down.

Going into town! That was when we did our shopping, put on our best clothes, and saw life. We would drive into town in the spider, a large roomy vehicle, but not too large for the loads of us that sometimes went in and all the bundles that came out. We generally started very early in the morning, and people thought us very lucky to be near enough to drive in and out of town in a day, and not have to outspan, either, on the journey. If it were market-day, we would be sure to see other carts on the way, some of them with Dutch people, and the Dutch girls would peer out with their faces almost covered up

in their handkerchiefs to prevent the sun from burning them.

Then, as we got nearer into town, there would be the long waggons which had brought the produce in from the farms, each with its span of oxen, little black leader and driver with his long whip. The market was held quite early in the morning, and by the time we drove in most of the waggons would have outspanned until it was cool enough to go home, or they would be loitering round the different large stores, loading up bags of groceries or various things that the farmer was taking in part payment for the produce he had sold to the store-keeper.

Queenstown is a pretty little place, but very like all up-country towns in South Africa. The buildings and roads are the same as elsewhere, the people and their ways are the same; there is nothing remarkable, so that is why I will tell you all about it.

To begin with, the roads are wide and uneven, with small sluits often running across, and at the sides are pebbly footpaths bordered by straggling trees, which, however, make a pleasant shelter from the sun. The houses stand back in gardens, low-built, with cool and shady verandas, which are covered with vines or creeping plants. There is a main street running right through the town, containing the public buildings, and the big stores, and the hotels, where the men sit and smoke on the stoep and watch the passers-by, leaving their horses tied up to a post outside. In other parts are the railway-station, the church, and the chapel, and outside is the location, where the Kaffir servants live who work in the town in the day-

time, and around all is the common land belonging to the municipality. Queenstown itself is built quite on the flat, but over and above rise the mountains. One, sheltering the town, they call Hanglip, because of the rocks which hang over and make a big krantz at the top, and to one side is a kopje, from which one can get a bird's-eye view of the whole place, called Bowker's Kop, after one of the leaders in the Kaffir War. It was not until after this war of 1850 that Queenstown was founded, so that it cannot be called an old settlement. The arrangement of the buildings still bears testimony to the unsettled times in which it was begun. The streets are so laid out as to all meet in the market-place, so that if any attack was made on the town by the natives, all the roads could be covered from the centre at the same time. The town was called after Queen Victoria, as its name shows, and since its foundation has been in as thriving and prosperous a condition as the South African energy of its inhabitants will allow. The geography books say that there are 4,050 souls in the town, but where they all get to I cannot say. The streets never seem busy, the people never hurry; everybody apparently crawls through life easily and enjoys it, as they do in all places at the Cape.

As it should be, the church and the chapel are the finest buildings in the town, and give it an air. The interior of the church is quite pretty, but when I was there the outside tower was still unfinished. The story goes that when Mr. Rhodes came to Queenstown they took him round there on purpose, so that his heart might be touched, and his pockets, too, by

the sorry sight of the steepleless church. But it was of no avail; he went on his way unmoved. Perhaps he didn't care much for churches, or didn't think he was going to die yet; at any rate, the church remained as it was.

The Town Hall is in the principal street, and the same block of buildings contains the town offices, the post-office, and the library, where you subscribed and got the newest books from England. Do I say the newest? Sometimes, perhaps. For I remember while I was there, there was a discussion as to whether 'Trilby' should be admitted into the library or not. The committee was divided into a conservative party with morals and a progressive party with none, and reverend gentlemen called each other names, and it was a grand fight; but I don't know now if the youth of Queenstown were permitted to be demoralized by 'Trilby' or not.

This reminds me how, at the time when every woman in England was riding a bicycle, they were still with us discussing the played-out question, 'Should a woman ride a bicycle at all?' Which things show that if one goes three weeks' journey from England, and then for a day or so up-country, one cannot expect to be quite up-to-date. And, besides, who wants to be? There the people have a hot sun to warm them, plenty to eat, fresh air to breathe, wide open country around them, and a blue sky above them, wider and more open still: what need have they to bother their heads about what the folks in a little foggy island are thinking and doing?

We used to go in to town for shopping. That was

necessary, for, although out on a farm you need not dress much, and clothes are not an expensive item, still, one must have something to cover one. And we used to go in for religion, but not often ; it seemed such a long ride or drive to go in for church. And for pleasure—well, that was another matter. When there was anything important happening in Queenstown, we generally used to go in for the fun.

I went in for a good many dances, which were constantly being got up to celebrate some event or other, or often for nothing at all. I never met such people to dance as the colonists—anyhow, anywhere, with anyone ! Even the question of supper seems a matter of secondary importance. Where there are no theatres and no concerts, dancing is the one amusement, and is highly appreciated ; it is with many the one joy of their lives, and in the country the young people will often ride miles and miles to a party. They dance all night, for in the little Cape houses there is no room to sleep all the guests, and so they keep on till sunrise, when they will have coffee, inspan, and be off again, thinking the enjoyment received is well worth the energy and time expended in obtaining it.

Then there was a great revival among the volunteers when I was in Queenstown—just after the Jameson Raid—and, of course, they celebrated their inauguration of the corps with a dance in the Drill Hall, so that they might have a fitting opportunity of showing off their band and their new khaki uniforms, which seemed to have been ordered wholesale, for, unfortunately, none of them fitted, some being much too

tight, and some too loose. And the Lieutenant was there, too, in eyeglasses and the grand new mess uniform which he had ordered for the occasion; and he told me in the exuberance of the dance that, as the Bishop was in town, he was going to be confirmed the next morning, in order to set an example to his men. But then I heard afterwards that he wasn't a Lieutenant after all—I don't know how it was—but that he was engaged to a widow in Seymour, or somewhere; and I should think that was much better than being a Lieutenant, especially if she were rich. Ah, these volunteers — little and big, crooked and straight, mixed up all together! But soon after I heard that some of them were wading through sand and lugging on to baggage waggons up there in Bechuanaland, where you can scarcely get any water to drink, and the natives won't let you get near them. And I know they emerged from this campaign covered with glory and well worthy of their predecessors, who had fought in many a Kaffir war in their time. And now they are fighting again.

I enjoyed myself at this volunteer ball, and at others. Besides these, there were in town quiet little dances, fancy-dress balls, and dances for children, where the colonial youngsters learn to frivol and flirt before they know the multiplication table, and behave as if they were grown up.

And who has not heard of the Dutch dances at the Cape? The Boers are as keen on it as are the other colonials; but they have different steps of their own and different ways. A friend of mine went to a Dutch dance once, and she told me all about it.

They danced on the mud floor in the voorkammer—the living-room of the house, into which the door opens from outside—and the dust rose thicker and thicker until you could scarcely see across the room. Then there was a pause, during which they watered the floor, and it, of course, became thick mud, and was ruination to the dresses. But the Boer girls generally change their frocks two or three times during the evening, in order to show off the extent of their wardrobe, and from their youth up are accustomed to dirt in the ballroom, so they do not take their soiled raiment much to heart. On they go, dancing merrily, often to the concertina where they can't get a piano, with their arms entwined round each other's necks in the regular Dutch fashion. They mostly keep to the same partner all the evening, which would strike us as rather monotonous; and as for sitting out—well, in that way they fare rather badly. The house is small, but there may be a stray box or two in the kitchen to sit down upon, or on either side of the voorkammer are the bedrooms, and you can stumble in there and sit on the edge of the bed in the midst of the sleeping or squalling babies, which are deposited all round about while their frivolous parents are enjoying the festive dance. It would be impossible to leave these youngsters at home—who is to look after them? So they are all bundled into the cart, and come too, and are safely stowed away somewhere.

In town, too, dancing was the greatest amusement; and, besides that, the people seemed to spend their lives quite happily, and took up a good deal of

time in enjoying themselves. The ladies devoted all the morning to work in the house, as is necessary where there are only black servants to depend upon, but the afternoons they devoted to play. They rode, played tennis, had croquet-parties, and went out calling. That is a great institution in the colony. People are always calling on each other, and it seems the correct thing, and at the same time the most enjoyable thing, to do. A friend comes to stay with you who is a stranger in the town, and she and you appear at church together. Then immediately all your friends rush and call upon her—it is all part of the kindly hospitable feeling of making everybody welcome—and then you go round with her and call upon them, and so everybody feels at home with one another.

I used sometimes to stay in town for a few days at a time, and so got to know the people and the place quite well. It was so different to England, with the little sunny houses and the stoeps covered with green, and the Kaffir servants droning around, and the English girls in their kapjes chatting to each other over the fences in the morning time; everything was quiet and drowsy. . . . But still so like an English town in many ways. But in little places all the world over one's neighbour's business is very near to one's heart, be it in Queenstown or anywhere else. There are different ways, though, of being one's neighbour's keeper, and, in general, it is a kindly way out there. If there is anything to be done in cases of sorrow, need, or affliction, friends are sure to turn up who willl end you everything they possess, or will give it

to you, even, or they will take you in, take bodily charge of you and look after you.

As I have said, there were croquet-parties, and these naturally were a good opportunity for gossip. Croquet was a great game in Queenstown when I was there, and everybody used to possess some sort of ground, whether they had a yard the size of a soup plate or three or four acres of veld. People used to get very enthusiastic, and the more enthusiastic they got the more they quarrelled, and thought the opponents cheated. That is always the way when croquet and human nature are combined, and I do not at all wish to insinuate that it is confined to Queenstown, or even to the colony. There were croquet tournaments which were quite exciting to watch, but dreadful to play in. I was always frightened of the spectators, of the opponents, and most of all of my partner; so I did not distinguish myself, and preferred rather to be among those that looked on.

There would be eight playing in the middle, while around on forms would sit the spectators, mostly ladies. I would sit among them, and they would go chattering and talking on (not about croquet generally), and I would listen, and learn all the gossip of the town. How two men had come out from England to start a brewery: one was married, and one wasn't. Now, which was it? How the tenor distributed chocolates to the ladies in the choir during the sermon, but, then, he was *the* tenor. How Mr. So-and-So was really at last engaged to Miss So-and-So, and how . . . It sounds rather unfair for me to have sat and listened all the time, and never to have said

anything. I thought so myself once, until I remembered how many women there are in the world who like to talk, and how very few there are who care to listen. That quite altered the case. In time I grew to look upon myself quite as a philanthropist.

But I must be candid, and own I enjoyed a piece of gossip as well as anybody, and I liked very much to hear what my neighbours were doing, or what they ought to have done, and, best of all, what they ought not to have done. A good bit of news is so nice, so refreshing in the common round, the trivial task, that it appeals to the most superior of us, and to the generality of mankind is the salt that savours the bulk of our conversation. There were little stories that we told amongst ourselves, and now and again there was some wonderful piece of news, at which the whole town held their breaths before they simultaneously burst into talk. It was like that when the Rector got engaged. That was the greatest thrill in my time, it was so sudden, so unexpected; no one talked of anything else for a fortnight.

The Rector was a prominent figure in Queenstown, and people liked him very much or disliked him very much. He had many admirers—and enemies. These last said nasty things about him, and called him a Jesuit in disguise, which was a great compliment to his tact, cleverness and worldly wisdom. We, though, were always glad when the Rector came out to the farm, which he did sometimes, to spend the night on his way to preach at Whittlesea. The children liked him because he brought them sweets and asked for a holiday, and everybody

around us liked him, too, including the Dutchwoman over the river, because he had once kissed dirty little Maria. His visit to us was quite an event. The Kaffirs would spot him coming over the rise, with his coat-tails flying, and laughed at his riding, because he didn't care how he went or where, or what happened to the horse. Then supper would be prepared, and the fatted calf killed, and the children would be decked out and would afterwards perform and sing their little songs. The next morning the children would again be swept and garnished, and then were set out upon chairs round the parlour and we had family prayers, after which the Rector would go off on his way to Whittlesea.

I was at Port Elizabeth on my holidays when I heard of his engagement, but directly I landed in Queenstown a lady at the station ran up to me.

'Have you heard the news?'

'What news?'

'Why, did you ever! The Rector's engaged!' She was very disappointed when I said I had heard all about it, but that didn't prevent her from indulging in elaborate details.

It was late, and I was staying the night in town. In the morning, after breakfast, I was standing in the garden:

'Ach! here you are back again,' said someone over the gate. 'How did you like your holidays? We have a piece of news for you up here. What do you think? The Rector's engaged! You heard it at Port Elizabeth? My! news does travel quickly! Just fancy you knowing it! Well, I was the first

almost that knew about here. Mrs. —— told me as soon as she could. You see, she's the churchwarden's wife, and, of course, they knew.'

Then I went out shopping, and I was in a store—one of those large colonial stores where they say you can get everything you want, but, of course, that depends on what wants you have succeeded in eliminating—when a lady dashed over to me. She was middle-aged, and solid, and the mother of a family, but still she dashed.

'Isn't it dreadful?' she said. 'Haven't you heard?'

I feigned ignorance and looked vacant.

'What! don't you know? Such a dreadful shock! What do you think? The Rector's engaged! Everybody is talking about it. He, of all people, and he told me himself the Church would always be his only bride!'

I said that, as so many men apparently found it difficult to remain true to a visible bride, there was some excuse for a man forsaking an invisible one. But she would not listen, and went away saying: 'I shall have it out with him. I shan't be happy till I do.'

I don't know whether she ever did. She was very much upset, but I did not know what to say to comfort her. Of what use are words when our idols fall to the ground, when our pitchers get broken at the fountain, when our cherished priests take unto themselves wives?

But it was a good piece of news, that.

I noticed that when we chatted our conversation generally turned on to some man or other. I suppose

it was because we were up-country and not quite up-to-date, and were sometimes hard up for a topic of conversation; one cannot imagine women discussing men under any other circumstances. Another thing I noticed was, when they talked over a man they always came to the conclusion that he either was engaged or else that he drank; I don't know which was pleasanter for the man. Very likely either statement was true, perhaps both.

At the Cape men generally get engaged young, and I am afraid it is not an unusual thing for men to drink also. It is a nasty thing to think of, to picture one's most esteemed friends reeling; but they say you can always tell whether a man is a gentleman or not when he's tipsy. There are different excuses, of course, for the love of the cup that cheers, I suppose the first being that it does cheer, and that is a great thing among people who look upon life as a feast and not as a funeral. And secondly, as everybody owns, it is a dry country and a thirsty country, and the irony of it is that the very climate makes the drink go to your head so soon — just a little, and there you are! So men can't help getting tipsy, especially up at the mines—in places like Johannesburg—where the amusements of life are inclined that way. One hears, as everywhere else, tales of homes broken up, families scattered, all through men who drink themselves to death and ruin their relations, and of all sorts of horrors. Not that I had much personal experience of this little weakness of those that inhabit warmer climes than ours. I must own my knowledge

is chiefly confined to 'They tell me,' 'Do you know?' 'I have heard.'

But once (I must tell you about it; I was young and innocent at the time) I was staying in Johannesburg, and I went with my friends to a dance at one of the mines, some way out of town. It was held in the hospital; I forget now if it was a new building, or whether they had no patients at the time and were having a spring-cleaning. At any rate, it made a nice place for a dance, and the doctor was there. He was an Irishman, and, like all Irishmen, was very witty and amusing. We had a dance together and arranged for another; but, alas! supper had intervened, and it was later on in the evening that the next dance came. He was still charming, and we began.

'Oh, please, I am so stupid—I can't reverse!' I cried, when we got half-way round the room.

'Why, I'm not reversing,' he said.

'Oh, but you are; you aren't going straight.'

'Oh, it's all right;' and he went on. But it wasn't. I never experienced such a funny sensation in my life; he kept bobbing up and down like a cork pillow in the water, and was as difficult to catch hold of. I saw people watching us, and, thinking we must look very peculiar, I at last induced my partner to stop. Immediately the lady with whom I had come rushed up, dragged me away, and said:

'My dear, what are you doing? Don't you see the man's as tipsy as he can be?'

'Oh, is he really? I didn't know; but he's been saying such nice things!'

'My dear, don't you know that's a sign? We really must go, the men are getting too dreadful;' and off we went.

But that was in Johannesburg, not Queenstown. Queenstown was different; there they lived in a mild way, and, I have shown, enjoyed themselves in a mild way. Now and again they had entertainments and concerts, in a mild way also. There were some musical people in the place who sang solos in anthems at their church or chapel, and they sometimes gave concerts, or the more worldly ones would get up a more worldly dramatic entertainment. Not many people beyond those of local interest honoured the town. The stars from home visited Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, and rushed up to Johannesburg and Kimberley—the only towns large enough to make their appearance pay. Queenstown had to be content with the visit now and again of a second or third rate company on tour, or of a former celebrity trying to retrieve his fortunes. When I was there Sims Reeves came round, and Mark Twain.

I saw Mark Twain walking along in the street, an old man with a bush of white hair, looking like a German music-master, and later on, at Port Elizabeth, I heard him lecture; he was going the tour of South Africa, and had taken the Town Hall there for several nights. I could not understand what he said at first, as I had never learnt American; but I laughed when the other people laughed, and towards the end I began to catch a little of the lecture, which was about a water-melon and a German fish-wife and his tour in Australia, and I started laughing on

my own account. I remember he read to us a poem he had made:

'To the land of Geelong
The righteous belong.
In the land of Penang
They don't care a ——'

The missing word caused a great deal of discussion afterwards. At the time, the good people in the audience immediately thought he'd left out 'damn,' and looked straight in front of them and saw nothing, least of all the joke, and of course wouldn't laugh, because there was nothing to laugh at, and the next day said the lecture was vulgar; but the hearers who were more worldly thought he had left out 'hang,' which was more in accordance with the dictates of rhyme and reason, and kindly criticised the lecture and the lecturer as not so bad, but nothing out of the way.

But the event of the year to us in Queenstown was the show—the agricultural show of the whole district. From far and near everybody came into town, and it was a grand meeting-place at which to see all one's friends and acquaintances. The show always lasted two days, and for the time being lessons were abandoned at the farm. The girls put their hair in curling-papers, and we all went into town, for it was rightly considered that the show itself was an education, and that the exhibits were incentives for my pupils to excel in their future duties of life. It was generally held in the summer, when it was still very hot, and the dust, as a rule, was terrific. When the

dust does blow out there it is fearful, coming along like a cloud, and completely enveloping you and blinding your eyes. But notwithstanding the heat and the dust, we were out all the time, and saw everything there was to be seen.

The first day's show was held outdoors, when there were cattle, sheep, dogs, and horses, together with stands of farm implements and the like. The second day was much more interesting—at least, to us—and was held indoors at the Town Hall, and the farm produce was exhibited—fruit, grain, butter, and tobacco. There was a motley assembly indeed, pushing each other, laughing and talking, and all sweltering with heat in the meantime. There was such a crowd! No one, apparently, looked much at the things, except to see if they or their friends had got prizes; but all were greeting each other and saying 'How d'ye do?' The exhibits, though, were interesting, all the same. There was fresh butter, which had taxed the exhibitor's ingenuity beforehand to the utmost to keep it from running away; salt butter in tubs of 50 pounds or more, ready put down for winter use; and cheese, too, which industry the Government experts were trying to encourage in those parts. Then there were sacks of mealies, peas, wheat, and all kinds of fruit, large water-melons, which looked so cool and enticing, pomegranates, oranges, naartjes. Besides all these and other things, there were flower competitions for the ladies, and prizes for needlework—of which some was fine—and drawings and paintings too.

I always liked that day at the show, although

people kept pushing and banging on to you; but perhaps in a corner on the platform a chair was vacant, and from there, undisturbed, one could watch the crowd below. It was an interesting one indeed: farmers, farmers' wives and their children, all got up in their best; and the people from town too, the ladies posing in their costumes and bonnets which had been 'sent out from home'; tall, gaunt Dutchmen, with their long, straight beards and vacant eyes; and their wives, the Dutch 'tantes,' big, fat women, lugging hold of children; and their daughters, some of whom are pretty and slim, in gay-coloured dresses. There in the corner are a group of Hottentot boys, yellow, with black hair, all collar and shirt and hair-oil, with a Hottentot girl in a clean kapje. They are looking at the tobacco, for which, perhaps, the boss has taken a prize. Among the crowd we see the Church of England clergyman, with a look of home and college, and further on, with his black, old-fashioned clothes and solid face, is the Dutch Reformed minister, whose larder has been well filled by the produce brought in by the faithful. Over there is a stray mounted policeman, who has ridden in from the country—with his uniform, top-boots, and hat turned up at the side with the C.M.R. He is chatting with some of his friends and laughing, as he slaps his leg with his riding-crop. And nearer us are a group of schoolgirls, dressed for the occasion, and imagining themselves quite grown-up. They are looking at the flowers, and trying at the same time to attract the attention of the boys on the other side. But they have to move, and everybody has to make way too, for

here are some Kaffirs coming along carrying sacks, and they do not mind whom they hit against or how. Big black men they are, strong enough to take up any burden, with woolly heads and bare arms and legs covered with bangles. They yell out to each other in Kaffir, jostle with the people, and shove their way out to the door. A truly colonial scene it is, and such a crowd as only falls to our quiet lot once a year!

CHAPTER VIII

THE NATIVES

As I have said, the first thing that struck me when the ship stopped at Cape Town was the crowd of natives, which, together with the broad streets and low white houses, gave the place quite a foreign air. I had never been in a country before where there was a coloured population, and I could not distinguish at first between the different kinds of natives. They were all blacks to me, working at the docks or at the station, sauntering along the streets, driving cabs or selling fruit—Malays, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Cape boys!

Several people from the Cape, on the other hand, have told me how strange it seems to them on landing in England to see only white people, and the children could not understand the idea. 'What!' they said, 'have you white people to do the nasty work, too? We shouldn't like that. Fancy if we had to say "please" and "thank you" to a Kaffir.' Most housekeepers up-country, who have never been home, have a great objection to white servants; and certainly what specimens there are of such domestics at the Cape are very bad, and generally, with their

grand airs and fine clothes, are much more bother than they are worth. 'No, our black servants may be stupid,' the housekeepers say; 'but they can't read our letters like yours do!'

There are many different races—or shall I say relics of races?—at the Cape, which have their own separate history, their own customs, and their own language. The little Bushmen who, when first the Dutch colonists came, harried and worried them so much by their poisoned arrows and cunning thefts, have now almost entirely disappeared. Driven back by the tide of civilization, against which they could not stand, they have taken refuge in the desert, where, as of old, they can follow their primitive habits, snaring and hunting their game, and in default of this grubbing in the ground for bulbs and roots, or feeding on locusts and ants' eggs. They, with their wrinkled faces, large bodies and spindle legs, are more like baboons than human beings, and stand to remind us of a time when man was nearer the animals than he is now.

From the beginning it was found impossible to civilize them or train them as servants, partly owing to their own wild and treacherous habits, and also owing to their fear of the Dutch, who, like all Europeans exploring at that date, treated the natives brutally, and had no conception whatever of their rights and liberties. The various tribes of Hottentots who lived around the shores of the Cape Peninsula in those days, also, would not work for the new colonists, so in order to solve the labour problem the Dutch East India Company imported slaves from

their possessions in the East Indies, straight-haired folk from Java. This is the origin of the greater part of the Malay population, which we find principally settled now at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Down at Port Elizabeth I went over a large old-fashioned Dutch house, with big, wide rooms and flat roof, and in the courtyard were still outhouses, where the owner used to keep his slaves. But, of course, all that is long since over, and now the Malays are settled happily as freemen, although they still keep to their religion, and make pilgrimages to Mecca. Other Indians have joined them, and they seem a thrifty community, the men earning their living by fruit-hawking, and the women by washing. Their Oriental costumes give colour and change to the scene, the Malay women looking gorgeous in their quantity of jewellery, wide-spreading skirts, and gay silk handkerchiefs on their heads.

The Hottentots are a numerous and more widely spread people—Hottentots so called: for, like the Bushmen, the pure-blooded tribes have mostly retreated up-country to Namaqualand and Griqualand, and there are few remaining in the colony. In this class we may put the 'Cape boys,' who vary in looks, colour and description, and are the results of the mixture which always takes place where black and white blood meet. These people and the Hottentots have no language of their own, and speak the Dutch, which their ancestors learnt in the early days and mixed with idioms of their own. This mangled language is the 'Cape Dutch,' or 'taal,' the servants' language throughout the country, which Boer and

Hottentot speak alike, and which a Hollander from Holland can scarcely understand.

By far the most numerous portion of the native population consists of the Kaffirs, who, themselves divided into various tribes, form part of the great Bantu race, which peoples South Africa as far up as the Equator. Early in the century, Kaffir tribes from the North made raids and settlements in what is now Cape Colony, advancing along the coast in a south-easterly direction, and thus they came into conflict with the English and Dutch settlers, who were beginning to explore the coast in exactly the opposite way. There were many Kaffir wars, displaying bravery and obstinacy on both sides, generally owing to disputes concerning the boundary which had been chosen to divide the territory of the whites from the blacks. Gradually the Kaffirs had to retreat further and further back, and finally their power was broken in a manner by their own hands. Their suicide was caused by their faith in one of their witch-doctors. He prophesied that if they would not sow their corn, and would kill and bury all their cattle, then on a certain day the sun would be red in the sky, their cattle would rise again increased a hundredfold, and the spirits of their dead chiefs would appear, and the English would be driven out into the sea. The Kaffirs killed their beasts, and would not sow their corn. The long-looked-for day dawned—but attended with none of the expected portents. Starvation now stared the natives in the face. In spite of the relief extended to them by the colonists, such large numbers of them died from famine and

distress that, in consequence, their power as a nation ceased to be. They are now subdued and peaceful, and they are quietly settled as servants about the country, looking upon Kaffirland as their home, a stretch of land beyond the Kei, which the Government allotted to them for a reserve, and where they may still possess large flocks and herds and follow their primitive customs, although they are gradually becoming more civilized by the various schools and missions in which the place abounds.

We were near Kaffirland, up on the farm near Queenstown, and all our servants were 'raw Kaffirs' — almost in their native state, heathen and uncivilized. From the first I was interested in them, they were so like children, always laughing and looking happy; but I never could learn their language, the clicks were so difficult, and the whole arrangement seemed so topsy-turvy and unlike ours. Perhaps, though, if I had understood all they said I should not have liked them so well. Nevertheless, the ignorance of the language is a great drawback, especially if one is interested in their manners and customs.

The Kaffirs, both men and women, are tall, fine people, very strong and straight. I have never seen a crooked Kaffir; but then they say, in spite of the English law, a child born deformed is always put out of the way, and so never grows up. The result is a race of strong and healthy physique. Their black skins are admirable, too, and shine with the fat and oil they love to rub on; but their faces are very ugly, to our way of thinking, with their flat noses, sloping

foreheads, thick lips, and woolly hair. It is only the little babies that are ever pretty.

On the farm they had built their huts on the other side of the orchard, underneath the mountain ; these were made of bushes and mud, with a hole left for a door, out of which the smoke came as well. There were ten huts or so over there, and all the men were servants on the farm, and minded the cattle and the horses and the goats. Some of the women worked at the house, and the others hoed and planted the lands which the Kaffirs had. That was women's work; in fact, all the hardest work is women's work among the Kaffirs. The men buy their wives, so I suppose they have some sort of a notion of getting their money's worth. Cows are still their means of exchange with each other. With the money he earns, the Kaffir man buys cows, and then with the cows he buys wives, so that his wealth is counted by the number of cows and wives he possesses. Though some of them are very rich, nothing on earth can convince them that their riches are safer in money at the bank than invested in cattle, which often get lung-sick and die, or in a wife who is constantly running back home again to her relations.

In the towns the natives are now obliged to wear European dress; but out at the farms they still wear their beloved blankets, which are much more suitable, graceful, and artistic. They buy these cotton 'blankets' at the Kaffir stores—formerly they used karosses—and rub red ochre into them, until with age they become a beautiful terra-cotta colour, which sets off well their black complexions and

numerous bangles and ornaments of copper, brass, and beads. The women's dresses are often quite elaborately made, and a Kaffir lady is most particular about having her skirt cut in the latest fashion. Above the skirt they wear, tied under the arms and hanging down in front, another strip of blanket, often grandly ornamented, while the back of the shoulders is covered or not, as the temperature of the day decrees. But one of the most indispensable parts of the Kaffir lady's dress is the handkerchief which she binds round her head, and which etiquette compels her to wear, whatever other part of her costume may be lacking. Sometimes three or four of these handkerchiefs will be worn, of different colours twisted in and out of each other, and so make a large turban, which is not at all unbecoming to these ladies, who have no back-hair.

The men wear big red blankets, too, and it is surprising how gracefully they swathe them round, while the second wonder is, how they keep them on at all, leaving at the same time both hands free. But generally, working about the house, the natives wore European costume, or portions thereof, and I used to barter away my old clothes to the women in exchange for their Kaffir necklaces and ornaments, and then had sometimes the pleasure of seeing my ancient garments proceed into town on a large Kaffir woman, the skirt coming a little below the knees, and slits cut in the sides of the bodice to make it expand sufficiently.

Of course, to English ideas, the Kaffir women as servants leave much to be desired—dirty and lazy,

stupid and stealing, and yet withal good-natured and laughing. Always laughing! My bedroom was next to the kitchen, and I could hear them all chattering and screaming: for the women on their way for milk at the kraal would go in, and the men would go in there, too, and they would all sit round and smoke, men and women alike, while the little black children toddled about and tumbled over the doorstep, and would sit outside and gnaw at any bone they could find. I loved these naked little babies, they were so chubby, fat and independent, and now and again I would take one up and give it a handful of sugar. Then there would be quite a commotion in the household: the white children would look on amazed, while the house-girl would dash to the kitchen with the news: 'Oh my! come and see! The schoolmissus is taking up a Kaffir!' And then all the rest would crowd in at the door and look at the sight. Fancy a white person nursing a black baby! They were astonished, and so they laughed.

It really was their laughing that made me like them. They say, 'A man may smile and smile and be a villain,' but we often forgive the villain because of the smile. In the same way, we may pardon the natives taking our sugar and coffee and fruit, because of the contented nature which causes them to do it. To master and to mistress, though, the servants must often be very aggravating. If you are kind and treat them as you would English people, they think you are frightened of them, despise you accordingly, and won't work. On the other hand, if

you treat them in the good old-fashioned way, and thrash them well, they may nowadays have the impudence to take out a summons against you. It is curious to notice how difficult it is for a man, full of philanthropic and the-black-man-is-your-brother sort of ideas, to manage his black servants or to get any sort of respect from them, while the detested Dutchman, whose people have always treated the Kaffirs like dogs, gets the most work and the most obedience from his servants.

These 'raw' natives seem practically to be without a religion; but they are very superstitious, and their witch-doctors have great power among them; besides that, they are ruled largely by the various customs and laws of their tribe. Their greatest belief, if it may be so called, is, like the Hottentots', in the 'spooks' of the dead, who they think at the least provocation return and haunt the living. They are filled with terror at the thought of a dead person; while the sick man is still alive, they are hurriedly digging his grave, and as soon as the breath is out of his body—or even before—they shove him in with all his worldly goods. To keep them would certainly bring his 'spook' to haunt them. Then the grave is filled up again and a heap of big stones put on the top. The hut where the dead man lived is next burnt down, and no one, for fear of ill-luck, will mention his name again. These rows of Kaffir graves on the veld are very solitary, looking neglected, and seemingly forgotten, but the natives will not willingly pass that way in the night-time.

They greatly believe in the power of the evil eye

and suchlike witchcraft. If anyone is ill, someone is bewitching him and casting spells upon him, so the witch-doctor must be sent for. Sometimes he doesn't arrive for two or three weeks, and the patient may die or recover in the meantime, but that is of no consequence. When he does come, a feast first of all has to be given in his honour: goats are slaughtered, or sometimes even an ox, and the poor relatives are often landed in great financial straits. But what doctor will work without his fee? After the feast and beer-drink,' the medicine-man condescends to interview the patient (if he be still alive), administers remedies, and by fortune-telling finds out who is bewitching him, and prepares to lay counter-spells. These witch-doctors undoubtedly have great knowledge of the various herbs and roots which they find on the veld, and know how to apply them medicinally; poison, too, they are said to extract from the snakes, and so can handle them without hurt, and some of the colonists believe that they really possess the power of second-sight.

Once we heard there was a witch-doctor at the huts, and we sent a message for him to come up to the house, as we wanted our fortunes told. Accordingly he appeared, an evil-looking old Kaffir with gray knots of hair on his head; he had an old red blanket flung about him, and round his neck he wore a necklace with charms and bits of roots tied on to it. He laid his sticks on the floor and sat down, while we all around watched him, and the youngsters scrambled on to the table to see what was happening. Then out of his bag he took his 'doll-oxen,' as the

bones are called that the children play with, and other little pieces of rubbish of metal and bone; muttering to himself, he threw them about, gathered them up, shook them, and threw them about again and again—and so our fortune was made. I must say that everything he told me came true, but, then, as I was ignorant of the Kaffir language, and did not know what the servants might have told him, I was not absolutely convinced of his powers of prophesy. But, at any rate, I have heard authentic tales from farmers—how their horses and cattle, when lost, have been found again at the places told them by the witch-doctor, so there may be something in their nature, after all, which we cannot understand.

The Kaffirs on the whole are a simple people, and are content with things as they are. They are quite satisfied if they have enough mealies to eat and sour milk to drink, and it is a day of jubilation among them when they kill a goat, or, better still, when one dies in their master's flock, in which case they promptly devour it, as they are not at all particular how a beast comes to an end, so long as it comes to an end somehow. They have great joy also in their Kaffir beer, which is made of corn, and when brewed is a nauseous gray mixture about as thick as porridge, but it makes them very tipsy. In the night-time they will dress up in their best and collect from the various farms at certain huts and have a beer-drink all together. These meetings are not allowed by law, and are liable to be summarily dispersed by the police. But they take place all the same; and sometimes on our farm, when the master was away, the

servants had a beer-drink. We could see them dancing at the huts in the moonlight, and their singing and screaming would keep up until early in the morning. They weren't very sensible or good-tempered the next day. Beside these beer-drinks, they have other great festivals, when even a beast is killed to celebrate the event. At Christmas-time they are always merry (that was a custom they have borrowed from their masters), and also at weddings, and when the young men and the girls become of marriageable age.

With the Kaffirs, the man is everything; the woman is only his chattel and beast of burden. He is the lord of all he surveys; she is only his humble slave. When one meets a family of Kaffirs trekking, it is the wife who goes trudging along with the children, with bundles in her arms and on her head, and a baby tied on to her back, while the man, in his superior way, rides on ahead seated on the one solitary jaded horse that the family possesses. It is the men who eat first at the feast; the women have to be content with the bones and scraps that are left. The parents always rejoice over the birth of a daughter, because that means cows in the future, and when the eventful time comes she is literally sold to the highest bidder. A nice young girl will fetch eight or nine cows, while an old hag will go for a goat or two. If the bride does not settle down quietly with her husband and he is careless enough to let her run home again, he has to pay some more cows to get her back, so a marriage may become a very costly proceeding. But in the end she settles

down and becomes accustomed to her husband's ceaseless thrashings. That is the men's privilege, and they seem to gloat over it, and will beat their wives for any paltry cause, or for none at all, often till the blood comes.

There was one horrid little Kaffir creature at the farm who was the nearest approach to a demon I have ever seen. He was about eight, and frightfully ugly, and would run about stark naked smacking a whip. Sometimes there was a disturbance in the schoolroom: I would look round, and there was Umsampiane flattening his nose against the window-pane and making uncouth noises. One day he was boasting how he would thrash his wife if she didn't cook his dinner properly for him—thrash her till she died.

'Then,' said the children, 'you will be hanged and die too.'

'Then I shall be able to thrash her still.'

'Oh no!' said the children, with their superior knowledge. 'She will be in heaven. You will be in hell.'

'But then I will say, "Good Lord, let me out once, and I will give my wife a good thrashing, and then I will go back to hell and live for the rest of my life."'

The women seem to take their lot very philosophically, and the ill-treatment of their husbands as a thing to be expected. This story was told me of a Kaffir woman who lived near by. She had been married some weeks, and one morning came into the kitchen sobbing bitterly.

'What is the matter?' asked the mistress.

'Oh!' she said, 'I have been married all this time, and my husband hasn't beaten me yet. I am sure he doesn't love me.'

But the unkindest cut of all in a Kaffir woman's life is when, after working for her husband for years, he sallies forth with the cows she has earned and buys a fresh young wife. This is not, however, quite as bad as it may seem, for each wife is provided with a hut and ménage of her own, and the first wife always takes precedence over, and is looked up to by, the rest. I well remember, though, the wailings of our old cook, Sara, when her ancient bald-headed husband brought home another wife. This fresh addition was a huge fine woman, so tall and big that she had been offered many cows to go to England in a show; but she had been frightened at the thought of crossing the water.

They have very primitive ideas, these people, about the sea and the great wide world beyond. Everything new strikes them with surprise and wonder, and then they laugh. I remember the first bicycle that came out to the farm. It belonged to the man who went round tuning pianos, and he had somehow managed to get out on his machine over the stones and the ruts. All the servants crowded to see him start off again, little and big, and as he glided away they yelled and doubled themselves up with laughter, and one old woman bawled out, 'Look! look! here's Satan on the wheel! Look!'

A donkey that came to the farm also created a great sensation. Apparently they were not very common in those parts, and most of the servants had

never seen one, neither had the little children. Of course, the youngsters were greatly excited over the 'jonkey,' as they called it, and they fought straight off for who should ride it first. But the beast proved too much for any of them, and eventually they were all frightened of it. Ronald had appeared with a rueful face, and said, 'The jonkey he ran away with me into the veld, and then he stop and he make a big noise, and I fell off.' And a like fate o'ertook the rest; but that was afterwards. The donkey had come out from town late in the evening, and it was not until the next morning that the servants saw the new, strange animal, and when the old cook brought round the early morning coffee, she cried, 'Oh, boss, you must look; there's such a big jackal in the camp!'

Oh, well, if you look upon the Kaffirs as big children it is all right: for that is what they are, neither more nor less. They have no ideas of truth, gratitude, or honesty; in fact, the children are taught to steal as part of their training, and are only beaten when they are stupid enough to be found out. But once you get this into your mind, and do not judge them from a European standpoint, you will find them a cheery, hospitable people, who compare well with the other races whom we have left behind with our civilization.

These natives—they are all so primitive, so refreshing, so amusing to study and to watch; but to order them about and make them work, that is quite another matter. The patience of Job isn't in it.

CHAPTER IX

AWAY ON THE HOLIDAYS

SCHOOL-LIFE on a farm, though, perhaps, not carried on with clock-like regularity, glides on in a monotonous routine, with the lessons, the farm life, the farm interests, the visitor who comes by now and again, stops awhile, and then passes on. Holidays form a break, and cut up the year into regular periods, making intervals of rest and recreation both for the teacher and the taught. We had long holidays twice a year, and then I generally went some way off for a change, for I wanted to see as much as I could of the colony while I was out.

I had friends at Port Elizabeth, and several times went down there in the train, thus renewing my acquaintance with the journey by which I had first gone down to Grahamstown, over the Stormberg, through a stretch of Karroo, and then on through the Zuurveld, with the bush, and the kloofs, and the krantzes, until by-and-by comes the river and the sand-dunes, and then at last we catch a glimpse of the sea beyond, which makes us feel nearer home at once, and more so still when we see all the steamers and shipping in the bay as the train comes into the station.

Port Elizabeth has been called the Liverpool of South Africa, and, compared to sleepy little Queenstown, it seemed to me a gigantic city, full of noise and bustle. It is, indeed, the chief seaport in the Cape Colony, and through it passes most of the exports and imports of Johannesburg and Kimberley. It is essentially a place of merchandise, and there Germans and Jews flourish and grow fat. From the sea it is an ugly place, rows of houses built on a dry hill, with not a trace of greenery to be seen. It stretches along the coast on either side of the jetty, and ends among sand-hills and scrubby bush. It improves, though, on acquaintance, and I grew to like the place very much. Perhaps that was because of the kindness of the friends — unknown to me before I landed in the colony—with whom I used to stay.

The town is fairly interesting, although there is nothing at all old or quaint about it. In 1820, when the memorable party of settlers came out to colonize the eastern portion of the colony, they landed here at Algoa Bay, finding only a bare coast and desolate sand-dunes and a small settlement, which was then called Fort Frederick. Soon, however, a town was founded, and was named Port Elizabeth, after the wife of Sir Rufane Donkin, who was then acting Governor, and received the emigrants on their arrival. It soon increased, and it has now become a large and flourishing seaport, with over 24,000 inhabitants. The floors where they store the wool and the hides for export are large, and very interesting to the visitor, and so are the markets, where the wool and

ostrich-feathers are sent down from up-country to be sold. Above the main street, with the public buildings and the stores, on the 'hill,' one is surprised to find, in spite of the dryness and the barrenness of the soil, hedges of oleanders and pretty gardens with palms and semi-tropical plants, which surround comfortable houses with large and airy stoeps; there are some good parks, and outside the town, the veld itself gets better-looking, and you think it is not such a bad place to stay in, after all; and not such a bad place to live in, either, if you like the free-and-easy, gossipy colonial life, with its endless round of pleasure and amusement.

The sea is grand here at Port Elizabeth, as it is all along the southern coast, which was for so many years a terror to the sailors, and still is, judging from the wrecks which line the shore. The sea is magnificent when the south-easter blows, and the dust sweeps in clouds up the streets, and the ships cannot unload in the bay. Then the waves are beautiful, mountains high, and dash with full force on the sea-wall or over the rocks far away, while the spray rises up in white clouds, and everything is wild and savage. On calm days, even, the waves are large, rolling with a big swell, but always clear, with deep and varying shades of blue and green. Beyond the town the scene is grander and more wild, and there are rocks, over which the water half dashes, little islands covered with bright green seaweed, where the penguins sit and flap their wings, and look half like birds and half like animals.

But I liked the sea best at East London; that was

where I had landed, and I spent some of my holidays there. It is not such a large town as Port Elizabeth, nor is the shipping so important, for, among other reasons, the landing is even a more difficult matter than in Algoa Bay. The Buffalo there empties itself into the sea, but few ships are able to cross the bar and come into the river. The bush around and the undulating land make the coast scenery very striking, especially on the east bank ; and although the houses and the place itself are very ugly, many visitors come down to East London from up-country, chiefly during the winter-time, because here by the sea it is always warm, and they do not get any frost. The scenery up the river, too, is very striking, and in the town is a fine public park left in the natural bush, where you can get beautiful views of the shipping and water below.

It was Easter when I was at East London, the place was crowded with holiday-makers, and the beach covered with girls lounging about on the rocks or paddling in dainty kapjes of pink, blue, and all colours. They all seemed to be enjoying themselves, and in the early morning the visitors would walk down to the beach in their mackintoshes and dressing-gowns and bathe from the rocks in quite a primitive way. People come, too, in waggons, and camp out by the sea for weeks and weeks at a time ; and once or twice, walking far along the coast, I saw a party of nuns who had come in their waggons for their holidays, too. They were always very quiet, and were generally sitting among the bushes, or below on the rocks nearer the water. They

would be reading or just sitting—contemplating, I suppose—while their white habits gave an out-of-the-world and peaceful look to the scene. The nuns from the Dominican convent at Port Elizabeth go for a picnic in this way, so one pale-faced Sister told me once when I was there. Every year for a month they leave the dust and the heat and the glare of the town, and all go away together into the bush in waggons, where they camp out and make a temporary home. And there, far away from everybody, under the blue sky and the trees, they carry on their devotions and meditations undisturbed, as if they were shut tightly within the walls of their convent. This seemed to me an ideal pious picnic!

I spent some holidays once at Cape Town; it was Christmas-time, and very hot. We took over two days and two nights to get there, and travelled along sweltering in the heat over country where not a blade of grass was to be seen. But it was better when we got nearer Cape Town and passed through the wine-farms with the old Dutch houses; and the woods around were, as usual, quite green, and appeared so refreshing after our journey across the dry Karroo. Down here they boast of having the greatest rainfall in the colony—about 35 inches annually, truly a magnificent record as compared with the 6 to 18 inches in the Karroo, and the rainfall of 2 inches only in some parts just south of the Orange River.

Although, of course, it is all altered, and the size of the town has much increased, one cannot help associating Cape Town in one's mind with the old Dutch times; there is an air of venerableness and solidity

about it which no other South African town seems to possess. There are buildings still which carry one back to the early colonial days, especially in the suburbs, where the company's officials had their houses and their farms. In the city itself the old-fashioned feeling is still kept up; the streets are wide, and the houses for the most part low, white, and uneven, which gives the place a spreading, careless, untidy look. There are some fine public buildings, however: the Houses of Parliament, the Library, the Cathedral, the different churches, and the station. This, by the way, is the one and only station, and is planted in the middle of the principal street; but that does not seem in the least to interrupt the casual traffic in the road, or to make any confusion or rushing among the passers-by. One can never imagine Cape Town getting excited on any occasion, but it actually has done so now and again; it generally goes on with its lazy air of quiet and even content. Many of the people come into town to work during the day, and live outside in the suburbs, which are like big villages scattered around Table Bay. There are Mowbray and Rondebosch and Wynberg in the country, with the houses buried in groves of oak, pine, and eucalyptus trees; and round the coast by the sea are Sea Point, Kalk Bay, Muizenburg, and Simon's Town, where the navy is stationed. There are beautiful walks all round the place, and for the energetic there is Table Mountain to explore, with its fascinating rocks, krantzes, and views down on to the sea, and with its unique lilies and flowers that the botanists tell us so much about.

I was staying down there some time, but it was not exactly a visit of pleasure; the principal idea was to work. The Education Department during the vacation arranged classes for teachers—to teach them how to teach—and everyone who applied early enough might attend them. So that is how I came to Cape Town. The Government issued free tickets on the railway to the teachers, but they took good care to make us work our tickets out. The lectures were held at the Normal College, and we were divided into different classes—for the men and women, and the first and second course—and for lecturers we had the most learned-looking men I had ever seen in the colony. For about five weeks the classes went on, and we had to be there five hours a day, besides which there was the home work they set you to do. After teaching for half a year, this was not much of a rest, and, moreover, it was dreadfully hot, and some of the lectures dreadfully dry. Every day we began with an hour's theoretical needlework—teaching us how children ought to thread their needles, etc.; and then we had an hour's theoretical arithmetic, when we tied our brains up into knots by trying to prove how many ways there were of proving that two and two are four. Then afterwards—by that time we were sweltering in heat and stupidity—we passed to such lithesome subjects as tonic sol-fa, gymnastics, and elocution.

Our elocution master was a theatrical-looking man, clean-shaven, who recited beautifully himself, but his method of teaching was rather frightening to the unsophisticated. His way was to give certain portions of poetry from the recitation-book for

different members of the class to learn by heart. I had allotted to me, 'Look here upon this picture and on that, the counterfeit presentment,' etc., and I have hated 'Hamlet' ever since. Then he would call out the name of some unfortunate from the list, who would have to march down, face the class, and say her poem, while her recitation was criticised and ridiculed for the benefit of the others. I used to hate this class, and feel all over nerves. For instance, having fronted the audience, and, after many attempts and examples, having assumed 'an easy attitude,' I would begin :

'"Look here upon this picture and on that——"'

'You really must speak louder. I'm sure that lady up in the corner can't hear you. Now, can you hear what this young lady is saying? No, I thought not. Well, begin again.'

Raising my voice, I started off:

'"Look here upon this picture and on that——"'

'You really are most absurd! You don't seem to have the slightest idea what you are saying. "Look upon this picture and on that." Two different portraits hanging on the wall, and yet you make no movement whatever, and keep your eyes fixed on the same identical spot. Perfectly ridiculous!'

I was so nervous that I couldn't have moved a finger, but I managed to jerk my eyes from one side of the room to the other, and started off:

'"Look here upon this picture and on that,"' and so on past the part about Hyperion's curls.

'There, now! Stop! You are getting in a perfect sing-song. Listen how it sounds. Now, you don't

admire that, do you? You seem to take no trouble or interest.'

Then he would say it for me to copy and for the rest to listen to, and I would go swimmingly on until—

'There again! No expression! I should like to be a pupil in your school. I should go to sleep directly lessons began. You put no energy in it at all. There's nothing whatever to be afraid of that I can see here, and yet you all seem to be frightened. Now, be natural.'

As if I could be! I only wallowed deeper in the mire, till at last—

'Now, that won't do! You don't even draw your breath properly. You are forgetting the primary rules. Your arms, too, are so stiff—no action. You seem afraid to let yourself go. Nothing to be afraid of, as I said before. See here. I don't mind letting myself go.'

And with that, turning to the audience, he struck an attitude, brandished his arms in the air, and recited the whole scene like a Forbes Robertson, while I, only too glad to let him let himself go, sneaked back to my place among my unfortunate companions.

Afterwards, curiously enough, I met our elocution master at a friend's house in London. He was quite nice, and said he was so glad to meet me. Oh yes, he remembered me quite well, which I sincerely hoped at the time was a polite lie, because it isn't nice to be remembered for one's stupidity.

Other lectures were equally galling to one's pride,

others were only wearisome, while some were actually interesting. The committee, too, kindly arranged treats for us, all of a slightly educational character. We saw over match and biscuit factories, and had different concerts and magic-lantern entertainments. So the time passed, and I must say the lectures were very helpful to me as a teacher, if only in proving to me how ignorant I was of even the elements of education. I never knew before how shockingly I wrote or how badly I sewed, and how I couldn't really spell for love or money. They gave us dictation full, on purpose, of catchy words, such as 'Psyche,' and 'physic,' and 'siphon,' only more difficult; and then in the end we had an examination, and afterwards Dr. Muir, the Minister of Education, came and gave us an address on our duties and responsibilities in carrying the Gospel to the heathen, or, rather, in carrying the Cape Government Educational Code to the poor illiterate children up-country; and then we all went home.

I liked these lectures very well, and I had enjoyed myself; but I quite agree with the Bible—it is more blessed to give than to receive. I found it much more pleasant to teach than to be taught.

There were quite a number of teachers down at Cape Town for these classes—considerably over 100, both men and women. The men were greatly in a minority. I never spoke to any of them. Some looked old and quaint, and others were young, and seemed as if they had come out to the colony for their health. I made friends with many of the women, most of whom, like myself, had posts on farm schools.

A very few had come from England. They were chiefly colonials, and some of them were Dutch. They were of all ages and of all descriptions. Some were clever and well read, and had only come for form's sake to get the certificate, and, on the other hand, some of the young girls were terrifically ignorant. Some were quite youthful, and had only taken up teaching until they got married. Others were old and had been at it for years, and had got no 'forrader.' From all accounts, it was not difficult to get work—of a kind; and then, of course, some had been lucky in getting posts that they liked, and some seemed to have had ill-luck all the while. I remember one poor being, who was getting old and was very faded. She, apparently, had no relatives, and had had no education. She was very mournful, and told me how she had been teaching among some poor Dutch, who were very filthy and low, and used to eat their skinny sheep that died, just like the Kaffirs do, and so during the last quarter she had been buying her own meat (tinned meats, beef extracts, and so on), and in that way she had used up almost all her salary; but still she was very wizen and thin. I felt quite sorry for her, and was thankful that my lines had fallen in more pleasant places.

After I got back, I found that the lectures, however elementary and faddy I might have thought them, were of great use to me in my school work, and, needless to say, my pupils were taught elocution in the approved manner. But as a holiday it was all rather too much of a good thing.

Taking it altogether, I much preferred farm life to

town life, and the holidays I spent in the country I enjoyed the best, too. I liked to spend the whole day lazing away on the veld, or else to go away in the waggon crawling over the country. I had grown more accustomed to waggon travelling since my first experience at Grahamstown, and did not seem to feel the bumps so much. As I have said, many people go to picnics in waggons, and camp out for weeks by the sea, or in the mountains. The women take possession of the inside of the waggon, the men sleep on the ground underneath, and the food is cooked on the veld as you go along. The only thing needed is fine weather, and one can generally depend on that at the Cape.

If you are going some distance, you generally start in the night-time, because the oxen travel best when it is cooler. There is a large tent over the long waggon, while mattresses are laid all over the floor. The luggage and provisions are packed up at the back, and the pots and kettles hung on underneath. Then you get in, and, if you intend to sleep, settle yourselves sardine fashion across the waggon, with your neighbour's feet in your face, and your feet poking into hers. Then, as soon as the moon rises, the men come with the oxen, and there is a great noise and excitement and calling to the cattle and the boys, and yells in Dutch, till at last they are inspanned, and, with the leader at the head and the driver cracking his whip, off we go, while the moon is just rising over the mountains. It feels like being on board ship, the side-to-side motion, while the stars themselves seem to sway up and down, as they do at

sea in the night-time. All is so quiet and calm that gradually, watching the stars through the opening of the tent, you get drowsy and go to sleep.

Then all at once there is a tremendous crash, and you wake up and find your neighbour's feet on the top of your nose, while your own feet seem yards above your head. The waggon is all on one side, and there is a sound of rushing and gurgling underneath. You vainly try to extricate yourself, and sit up and ask: 'What is happening?'

They say we are in a drift; they can't get the oxen on.

And outside there is a great cracking of the whip, and you hear the boys in the water trying to urge the beasts on, and there is much swearing and calls of 'Trek, trek!'

And then, thinking to aid in the good cause, you all pipe out, too, 'Trek, trek!'

But an angry voice calls back from the outside:

'What are you making that row in there for, girls? Hang it all! don't you know the oxen are sticking?'

You do know it, and have dark thoughts of having to stay in the waggon with your toes high up over your head until the end of natural life. But all things come to an end, and at last the obstinate beasts are persuaded to move, and with a big tug the waggon is pulled out of the river and up the opposite bank.

They go on quietly now, and you settle down and calmly go to sleep again, until, in the early morning, you are awakened by the news that they have outspanned, and that coffee is ready. It is just sunrise, and the sky all tints of beautiful colours; the dew is

still everywhere on the veld and on the thorn-trees; the air as it meets you feels so fresh and clean and pure. And the coffee is the most delicious you ever tasted in your life—the roestekoeks, too, that have been roasting on the 'coals.' They are the regular colonial food, of baked dough, that everybody knows. According to the children, 'When Alfred was "bang" and sticking away, he had to watch the roestekoeks,' and I dare say his cakes were something of that description.

And then after a while you trek on again until you have gone some distance, or the sun gets hot, when you outspan for real breakfast or dinner and rest a long while, and do not go on again till the cool of the evening.

One Easter we went for a nice picnic like this—a whole lot of us—to see a polo match, which was somewhere away in Kaffirland: not that the blacks were playing, but the white people. I remember that one morning we went through a huge swarm of locusts. In the distance they looked like a large cloud of dust, and when we got near them they were so thick we could not see the sky, or the sun, or even the veld a little way off. Where they had settled, they left everything brown and bare. They were flying along with the wind, and came banging into the waggon, and crawled over us and all our belongings. I never knew they were such big, fat, horrid creatures before, so, being a woman and wise, I covered up my head and screamed.

Then we came to a big house, where we all got out and were most hospitably entertained. A brother

lived there with his two sisters, and it was a place always full of guests, who went and came when they liked and amused themselves how they liked. An influx of a big waggon party—to sleep the night, too—seemed to make no difference whatever to the domestic arrangements of the household, and we ate and made merry and in due time went to bed.

Then one of the ladies came with me, and said:

'This is your room. You must feel honoured to-night. This is the room Mr. Rhodes slept in!'

I had discovered that for these ladies there was one idea, one ideal in life—and that was Mr. Rhodes! I had often met with hero-worship, but never with such unbounded devotion as this. And yet, perhaps, their devotion may have had more common-sense about it than that of some women, for several members of the clan waxed fat on the crumbs that fell from the Chartered Company's table, and had good reason for blessing Mr. Rhodes.

The 'hero' had been there once not long ago, and we were shown the teacup he used, and were told what he said, and all that he did, and how it was quite untrue that he was a woman-hater—for had he not stopped talking to them for five minutes after the boys had inspanned? And he wouldn't have done that if he had not appreciated ladies' society.

And now—'This was the room Mr. Rhodes slept in!'

But, alas! there were two beds. Which had been honoured by the ideal? Poor me! I never knew. I didn't stop long, though, to think; I was tired, and soon threw off my things.

For those that travel by land or by water, a shelf of a berth may be exciting, or the fourth of a mattress in an ox-waggon may be an interesting experience; but a common prosaic bed, standing on the level ground with its four unromantic, steady legs, is the best thing, after all, in the long-run. I felt so, and I soon fell asleep. But even then I could feel the drowsy motion of the waggon, up and down, up and down; and through it all I could see a little lady primly sitting, and heard her say: 'This is the room Mr. Rhodes slept in. Mr. Rhodes——'

CHAPTER X

ABOUT THE BOERS AND OTHER THINGS

WHILE I was at the Cape the Jameson Raid took place and the Matabele War, and all the excitement that came after them. But we remained quite undisturbed and peaceful through it all out at the farm, and scarcely knew what was happening till everything was over. And we heard rumours, too, of the rinderpest which was spreading down from the North, and how they were trying in every way to prevent it coming down into the colony. But it was all of no use. Afterwards down came the disease, and swept off the cattle before it, even as far as the sea.

I heard much more news of what was going on in South Africa from papers they sent me from home, although they were three weeks late, than I did from the small colonial papers.

I have often been surprised how little idea of the vastness of South Africa those people have who have never been out of England. At the time of this excitement in the Transvaal, friends wrote to me saying 'how interesting I must find it now I was an eye-witness on the spot'; and another person told me 'to take care not to get shot,' while we were

hundreds and hundreds of miles away from Johannesburg. The only signs of the disturbance down in our parts were among the English, some amount of extra bitterness in speaking of the Boers and Gladstone and Majuba Hill. The Boers, too, disliked us a little more than usual, and the Dutchman over the river was especially vigilant in trying to catch our cows when they strayed over on to his veld, and to drive them off to the pound. A little later, too, I saw in a Dutch house a grand picture of the victory of Doornkop, with the Englishmen strewn dead on the ground or fleeing in all directions. The Boers were all delighted that they had conquered the English, as they said.

I was surprised to find how distinct the two peoples still remain—the Dutch and the English. Though farming side by side, having the same interests, and having to fight the same struggles with the drought and disease, yet each race has preserved its own manners distinct and its own language and customs, and one wonders if the two races will ever be welded into one.

The Dutch are essentially a conservative race. Their lives are exactly the same as those that their ancestors lived when they first came out to the Cape and braved the dangers of the pathless veld and the unknown land beyond. The discomfort of their houses recalls the days when the waggon was their only dwelling, as they trekked from place to place in search of fresh hunting-grounds and pasture. They still have the same grand literal faith in the Bible as their forefathers had two centuries ago. The stern

Jehovah of the Israelites is their God, and this wide-spreading country of South Africa is their promised land. Their catechism is long, and comprises numerous questions about the Bible and the teaching in it. The answers to these the unfortunate candidate for Confirmation has to know by heart, and to be able to repeat off like a parrot. With many this comprises the only learning they have.

In the majority of cases the farms are too far away from town for the people to go in to church often, but there is one Sunday in three months, on which the Naachtmaal (Sacrament) is held, when everyone attends, some of the families coming in their waggons for two or three days' journey in order to be present. It is a gay time then for them all, for, in addition to spiritual wants, temporal wants have also to be supplied, and the Saturday before is devoted to buying and bargaining, and meeting and entertaining friends. They outspan and picnic just outside the town, or else live in the little houses which they keep on purpose for the Naachtmaal, and which are shut up during the rest of the year. All the household comes in, men, women, children, and servants, bringing their provisions with them, while also each party has brought in some present for the minister, and his larders are full of the meat, game, fowls, and bags of wheat, mealies, peas, that they give him.

So the Dutch at the Cape are a religious people—as far as the letter goes—and steadily resist anything new. They did not agree with having railways. Had not the Lord given them waggons and oxen? They opposed legislation for the extermination of

locusts, for was not this affliction from the hand of God? The same with the rinderpest—that was also the hand of God. It was wicked to try and prevent it. When at Johannesburg—that Sodom and Gomorrah rolled into one—some Outlanders made experiments to get rain by means of guns and firing into the air, these trials were looked upon as sacrilegious and as an insult to the dear Lord, who would naturally send rain in His own good time.

In their homes the Boers still keep to their same old customs. The girls for the most part are pretty, with slim figures; but as soon as they marry they neglect their dress, grow tremendously fat, and settle down into the regular Dutch 'tantes,' who sit with their feet on their little stoves all day drinking coffee, and swearing at the Kaffir girls meanwhile.

When a Dutch girl is fifteen or so she is old enough to be married, and then some young Dutchman who has seen her once or twice, perhaps at Naachtmaal, will ride up to the house one day and ask if he may 'upsit' with her. 'Oh yes.' So after supper the family retire to rest, and leave him sitting up alone with her. The tale says that the Dutchwoman sticks a pin into the candle before she goes off to bed, and that when the flame has burnt down to the pin the young man has to depart; at any rate, he is gone before morning, but returns some other evening to 'upsit,' and at last the marriage is arranged. There is a grand wedding, and the bridegroom generally, as the custom is, settles down with the bride on her father's farm, whither he brings his cattle, and where he builds a house and makes his lands.

They are very superstitious, too, the Dutch, afraid of 'spooks' and all kinds of magic. Death and funerals, as with other old-fashioned peoples, play a great part in their excitements and festivities. Funerals in this country have always to take place on the day following the death, so the Dutch take time by the forelock, and store their coffins away in the loft, so as to be ready for any sudden emergency. There they are used for the time being as cupboards and boxes for storing, and one hears tales of the apples being buried instead of the deceased and of all sorts of complications. The graveyard is often a small enclosure on the farm, so the funeral and the attendant rejoicings take place at the house. The friends and relatives come riding from miles and miles around. No one would miss such a treat for the world. They are great people for mourning, too, and revel in trappings of woe, which are often got ready before the person is dead. There was a Dutchwoman who lived not far away from us who had an incurable disease. She lay dying several days, and for her last consolation could hear the relatives cheerfully assembled in the next room cutting out the mourning and fitting it on.

Our nearest neighbours, in fact, were Dutch people, and lived in a red-brick house across the river, about a mile and a half away. They had a farm school, too, to which children came from the other Dutch farms round about, and they had an English teacher, whom I sometimes rode over to see, so I got to know the family there. There were the father and the mother, and a big, low-minded girl who went

to school, and some grown-up sons with large floppy hats, who used to take the waggon and go transport-riding in the Transvaal, and other little children besides. They were always very nice to me, and all came forward to shake hands with me in the limp Dutch fashion, and then I would hear the mother calling out something about 'coffee.' She was a strong, fat woman, and they told me she had once kicked the big Kaffir man Klaas out of the kitchen—and I can well believe it—and how she used to thrash her servants in the good old-fashioned way. She was once alone when I called, and she could not speak English, nor I Dutch, but we got on capitally.

When coffee appeared I smiled. 'Coffee mooi, mooi coffee,' I said, meaning to imply that her wretched stuff was excellent, and she straightway thought that I was a wonderful Dutch scholar, and began jabbering away as hard as she could, while I assisted in the delusion by jerking in now and again, 'Ya!' 'Ne?' Then she made me eat rusks and gave me grapes, and we parted very good friends, though I had not the slightest idea what our conversation had been about all the time.

Talking of rusks, these are the things which are always eaten with the eternal coffee, hard and crisp square blocks made of dough and sweetened. They were not of themselves nasty, but, bearing in mind many of the methods of Dutch cookery, nothing ever seemed very palatable to me in that house. The Boers make their bread from sour dough, so it has always a sharp, unpleasant taste, and in order to make it rise

the custom used to be to put the pan with the bread in it into the hot bed as soon as the occupants got up in the morning. This seems a nasty idea, but to bear out the truth of it a lady once told me of her father, a doctor, who used sometimes to attend the Boers on the farms around. The patient would be very ill in bed, but as the doctor approached the rest of the family would beg him not to lean on the bed or sit down on it, for fear of squashing the dough which was rising underneath the bedclothes.

The dishcloth is a great institution in the Boer household. A dirty bit of 'lapje' (rag) it is, which fulfils more than its allotted share in the common round, the trivial task. One minute it will be used to clean the host's feet, then the next minute it will be wanted to rub up the coffee-cup for you, the honoured guest, and in the next the Boer woman will use it to wipe the children's noses.

Their manners at meals, too, are in some ways peculiar. The carver helps the joint with his own knife and fork, and if any guest requires a second portion this same knife and fork are used again. It is always as well to start with all you want on your plate to begin with. Of course, many people will not be shocked at this economy in cutlery, which simply offends the sense of overdelicacy created by our civilization; but, unfortunately, there are other habits of the Cape Dutch which offend against the sense of decency and propriety, and which I will not touch upon.

It is an ideal picture to imagine the sallow-faced Dutchman riding his bony horse and herding his

goats on the veld, while his wife and family stay in the mud house by the kopje. They live a life as near Nature as white people can live, with the sun above and the blue sky, and the pure air blowing around them, with the bustle of the world far away. Their wants are very simple, they have enough mealies and pumpkins stored on the roof to last them in food for the year. Truly an ideal life! But the ideal never works out well in the reality.

These Dutch people are in a way the relics of a nation cast adrift from the tide of civilization 200 years ago. They, as it were, unknowingly stepped aside and let the times rush on beyond them. They stopped behind and followed their own lives and worked out their own salvation. In religion, thoughts, habits, modes of life, they are different from us in Europe. Their ways are not our ways.

Perhaps I have been unfair to the Boers. They, of course, as other people, have their virtues, and the habits of the low-class Dutch must not be confounded with those of better education, some of whom take the highest places at the University and the chief positions in the Government. But the worst of it is, at the Cape, that many of the better class will not own themselves to be Dutch. They adopt English ways and call themselves English, or turn and twist their names about and say they are of French extraction, thinking of the small band of Huguenot refugees who came out in the times of persecution. We went for a walk once round Table Mountain, and all the way a young man was explaining to us that

his name was Jourdain (pronounced French way) instead of Jordaan (pronounced Dutch way). As if it mattered!

Many tales of the Boers I heard, but I cannot linger over them. I liked to listen to the stories of what happened years back, when the colony was still young and the halo of romance surrounded its early beginnings—of Van Riebeek, the first commander of the little calling-station at the Cape; of Ryk Tulbagh, the Little Father Tulbagh of the early colonists, whom he loved as if they were his children, but whom he ruled over autocratically, nevertheless. It was he who introduced the sumptuary laws from the company's possessions in India as a check to luxury and extravagance. None but the highest officials were allowed to carry umbrellas, ride in carriages, or have any display at their funerals. Then there was the grim Dutch Governor Van Noodt, whose death was looked upon as a chastisement of God. He had ordered some men to be executed unjustly, and when the soldiers came to tell him that the sentence had been carried out they found him sitting in the summer-house—dead, too.

And then in our own English times there is the tale of that left-handed son of King George, who, I suppose, after all, was better than his ancestors were. He was sent out to the Cape with the promise that he could have all the land he could see from any spot he selected. He wisely chose out one of the most beautiful places in the colony, in the Knysna district, and settled down there. He took a black woman to live with him, and was faithful to her until she

died. Some time after he took another black wife, and then the minister came up and begged him to make this marriage, at least, lawful and holy in the eyes of God and man, and offered to perform the ceremony. But he would not give way to the minister's entreaty. 'No,' said he, 'the first one, though she was a black woman, was a good and faithful wife to me. I cannot desecrate her memory by marrying the second!' He had many children, whose descendants still live in those parts; they are proud, and boast of having Kings' blood in their veins, but the black blood comes out, too.

And I liked the story, too, of Dr. Barry; it reads so like a novel, and one can scarcely believe it happened in real life, and not so very long ago, either. It was when Lord Charles Somerset was Governor of the colony, about 1820, that a young doctor came out from England. He was a little man, clean-shaven, good-looking and brilliant; and as he was also armed with introductions from very exalted personages, he became a great favourite in society. He kept open house, attended all the grand functions, was a great flirt, and ladies broke their hearts for him. But of no avail: he would not marry one of them. He had a fiery temper, though, and liked his own way, and in a fit of anger he once openly struck the Governor across the face. But, contrary to rule, the stern, autocratic Lord Charles never sent him a challenge in return: people remembered that long after. And then some years later he obtained a very high Government appointment, medical, in India (it is strange to think of), and so he sailed away and left

his moaning patients and lovesick ladies behind. And then in time Dr. Barry grew old, and his hair got white, and he retired from the Indian service and settled in England. He lived alone, with his dog, having many acquaintances, but no intimate friends. At last he died, and then they found out it was only a shrivelled little old woman, after all. That was a good joke, and a good tale about a woman. She kept her secret until she was dead! She left no relations to explain, no friends, but somebody must have known. A few days after her death a strange man called at the house and took away her little dog, but he disappeared again, so that they could not follow the clue.

And many other tales I liked to hear again and again. But the stories of a country should be told in that country. It is by the sea on that stormy, rock-bound coast that one ought to listen to the stories of the shipwrecks and the rescues, many of them tales of heroism and self-denial. It would be a long list indeed if one could write down all the names of the vessels which have been lost on the Cape coast, since Bartholomew Diaz first discovered the 'Cape of Storms,' down to the present day. The hulks of the ships are still to be seen on the shores. It is a sad sight, but who cannot fail to be thrilled when he remembers with what bravery many of these disasters were accompanied?

There was the wreck of the *Jonge Thomas*, which struck on a rock in Table Bay in 1773. She was so near land that the people could almost talk from the shore to those on board, but they could not help

because of the fury of the waves. Suddenly a young Dutchman, named Woltemaade, sprang into the sea on his horse, and swam to the wreck, and brought back two of the sailors, clinging on either side of his saddle. Seven journeys he made, and so he rescued fourteen of the crew. He was returning yet another time, when the waves proved too powerful for him. He was swept under by the sea, and both he and his horse were drowned.

And who does not know of the wreck of the *Birkenhead*, when men taught men to die? She was a troopship sent round from Cape Town with a regiment of soldiers during the Kaffir War of 1851. Just outside Algoa Bay she struck on a rock. It was a dark night, and there was no chance of rescue. There were only two small boats, in which the women and children were speedily placed. Meanwhile the men were all drawn up on deck, with their band playing as if they were on the parade-ground, and there they stood calmly and bravely, while the boats got away, and until, soon after, the wreck broke up and the vessel sank down into the sea. The land was too far off to reach by swimming, and the waters were teeming with sharks, so that very few ever reached land. Four hundred perished.

And on the veld—one can hear such stories of adventure and daring there too! Of the little skinny-legged Bushmen hiding behind the rocks to shoot their poisoned arrows at the Dutch; of the Hottentots and slaves; and of the voortrekkers themselves, of their courage and perseverance as they went to carve a new country for themselves

in the dry desert, and of the lonely lines of graves they left behind them ; and of the English colonists, too, on the eastern frontier, and the wars with the Kaffirs. Tales of horror and bloodshed ; one can imagine it all : the waggons drawn up and made into a laager for the women and children ; the farmhouses burnt to the ground, and the lonely trading store in ashes, and the trader himself—only a few bones that the jackals and vultures have left. . . . One can imagine it all—all the hardships, all the privations, all the sorrows of these early settlers, whose names we do not know, but to whom we owe so much ; all the loneliness of their life, perhaps the loneliness of their death.

'Then the wood failed, then the food failed, then the last water dried :
In the faith of little children we lay down and died.
On the sand-drift, on the veldside, in the fern-scrub we lay,
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the way.'

CHAPTER XI

GOING HOME

I SPENT three Christmases at the Cape, but they were not like Christmas in the old country. Christmas is essentially a festival of the fireside and the home; but where you are only too glad to be without a fire, and in a country where people live so much in the open air that the ties of home *per se* are naturally much slighter, the festival turns out rather a fraud according to English ideas.

One Christmas Day I was at Port Elizabeth at a house where they still kept up the old customs and the traditional food and bakemeats, but it was a painful proceeding. A strong south-easter was blowing, and it was tremendously hot. We battled to church in the morning, and then sat down to our Christmas fare, absolutely streaming with heat—roast beef, plum-pudding, champagne, and all that kind of thing, until one longed to die; but we bravely ate on for 'auld lang syne,' until at last we had done full justice to the feast. Then I suggested a little rest would be nice, as I felt quite sleepy, but really it was because I felt so knocked up. You can't think what an exertion and literal penance it is to keep Christ-

mas in the good old style with the thermometer almost up to boiling-point.

The next year I was in Cape Town, where we did not gorge so much, and fed on chickens and light things. But the last Christmas was the nicest and most comfortable Christmas Day I spent in South Africa.

I was staying on a farm somewhere between Queenstown and Tarkastad, where the land is high up, and it is generally cool even in summer, and the air blows fresh. We had dinner in the middle of the day—a good feast, and everything was deliciously cold. I've forgotten now what exactly we had, but I remember we had as the *pièce de résistance* some concoction of fowl without bones and hard-boiled eggs done up in jelly, and then turned out in a shape. It was very good and cool, and we called it Topsy, after the fowl which composed it. My friend up there was going in for keeping hens, and this was to form the nucleus, so it was rather good of her to let us eat up her whole poultry-yard for Christmas. And then, after dinner, we all drove off to another farm, where we amused ourselves, and in the evening time tried to dance; but we got too hot, and so we sat out on the stoep and watched the moon rise over the gum-trees. Then some man got a banjo and sang in the sort of a way that one does to the banjo, and we all joined in the chorus—'The Little Alabama Coon,' 'Poor Ole Joe,' and the rest, and, of course, 'The Old Folks at Home.'

'The Old Folks at Home'—and by the next Christmas I myself was at home!

I was out teaching on that one farm for almost two and a half years, and then I went away. I never quite knew why I went. I had enough work to do, enough money to spend, enough food to eat, and plenty of time to sleep. Maybe I thought I was growing into a groove. Perhaps I had a fancy that they wanted to see me at home; perhaps I'd a fancy I wanted to see them; or it may be, like Thoreau, 'Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spend any more time for that one.'

But, at any rate, I went, although I felt sorry to leave at the time.

Good-bye, you little white house with the thatched roof! Good-bye, you fowls and goats and horses and oxen, all of you! Good-bye, you naughty little white children! Good-bye, you dirty little black children! Good-bye, everybody—good-bye! good-bye!

I knew I should miss them all. England would seem so cramped and crowded after this. The country, even, would look so prim and petty with its neat little fields and regular hedges. And the conventions of England, with the faultless, methodical housekeeping! Oh, I knew I should often long for that comfortable land, where there is no spring-cleaning.

It is so different out there, and the people are different, too. I will not say they are better—comparisons are always odious—but they are different. Some folks say they can tell by a man's back if he is a Dissenter or whether he goes to church. On the same principle, though I will not say in the same

manner, one can always tell a colonist from an Englishman. That is a fact; there is a something peculiar to each, quite apart from whatever difference in speech there may be.

Colonial girls are as different as possible from English girls. There are so few 'new' women among them, or, rather, women with new ideas, that their position socially, intellectually, and politically is practically the same as that which women in England held thirty or forty years ago. They are most of them a good-hearted, generous, chattering and gossiping lot, who are glad to throw aside all study, reading and culture as soon as their school-days are over. Then anything for pleasure—dresses, frivoling and young men. No wonder they call the girls at home 'prim' and 'stiff,' while the English girls will think them fast, and despise their flighty ways and lack of book-learning, independence and self-reliance; but the colonial girls can beat them a long way in cooking and sewing and making the house comfortable to live in. I think most English *men* like colonial girls. I suppose for the same reason English *women* do not.

And the men at the Cape, as I said, are not like the men in England. Both, of course, are products of the lives they lead. To begin with, the average Englishman, when he enters upon life, dons a top-hat as the fitting accompaniment to any profession he adopts, which is identically the same as every other man must wear. It is literally a mark of conventionality and respectability, always hanging over his head, and he has to spend his whole life in

trying to live up to the size, shape and shininess of his own top-hat. A man in the colony, on the other hand, buys any soft felt hat that will suit his fancy; he can twist anything round it he likes, bang it up on one side and bang it down on the other, or pull it down over his eyes in front, just whatever suits his temper, taste, or disposition. So, in a manner, he is much more able to go his own way, choose his own life, and develop himself on his own lines, unbound by such hard rules of convention. Most of these colonial men look strong and healthy, don't mind using their hands, aren't afraid of roughing it, and don't care what they eat. Can we say they are on the whole more manly than Englishmen are? There is an odious class of beings that we have in England now, who spend all their lives in pretending to be what they aren't, and we call them 'cads' and 'bounders.' You don't get half so many of that kind out at the Cape, partly, I suppose, because everybody knows about everybody else, and partly because of the innate sense of kindliness which seems to be born with all of them. Of course, there is that objectionable class of colonial 'bounders' which one meets sometimes in England, who have come 'home' after having made their pile at the goldfields, and who have neither the brains nor the breeding to carry off the riches they have amassed.

But, happily, they aren't all South African millionaires; not all of them have made their fortune at the Rand. And, as a rule, they are content to be as Fate makes them: good, healthy animals, who can turn their hands to anything, and who don't bother

about books and about what happened in the world long ago, and what's going to happen in the future. Of course, I know there are some young men at the Cape who are very learned and well-read and have some ideas beyond dancing and enjoying themselves, but I don't remember ever meeting any. If I did, I suppose they had old-fashioned notions about expending their brains upon women—wasting their sweetness on the desert air—and so they kindly hid their light under a bushel and adapted their conversation to my feminine level.

Yes; life altogether seems to be more simple and less involved at the Cape than in England. There is none of that killing competition which ruins life in the old country; they say there is work for everyone if he cares to do it. So many luxuries, and even necessities, at home disappear in housekeeping at the Cape, for the simple reason you can't get them, and you then learn to do all right without them. People as a rule marry much earlier than they do in England, the men as well as the girls, and they seem to set up housekeeping in quite an inconsequent way. They cut their garment according to their cloth and live upon what they have, and do not take overmuch thought of the morrow. They are glad to welcome everybody, and children sprawl all over the house. I must confess, as an outsider, that this system of providing no nurseries, and so having the children, like the poor, always with you, is not an unmixed pleasure after being accustomed to those delightful institutions at home, where the offspring are safely guarded, and only emerge, well

cleaned up, at stated intervals. But that is all part and parcel of the free-and-easy life; nobody seems to mind; the children, like everything else, are taken as a matter of course, and it is quite the proper thing when you are making a call for little Dicky to march in and smear his jammy fingers all over you, or, if he is a little older, to sit down and air his ideas on the world at large.

Compare this with the picture of the two young people in England. To begin with, a young man in England—the young man in the top-hat—has generally a great idea of his position, especially if his grandfather sold pork or what not; but there are so many other men built on exactly the same pattern as himself, and the competition among them all is so great, that he does not wax fat in worldly wealth. He falls in love with Bertha, but he does not marry her; his position does not warrant that. So he works on, and in the meanwhile, however, he enjoys himself as other young men do 'in his position.' After fifteen years he at last solves the problem of how to keep two maids and a boot-boy instead of a general servant, and can start with a menage equal to that of his acquaintances. He proposes to Bertha. Bertha in the meantime has had a mission to the masses—happily, there are no masses at the Cape—or has been improving her mind, while she has been disimproving in looks. And then they marry, and people say, 'How romantic!'

It is difficult and also unbecoming for me to write a dissertation on the virtues and vices of the Cape people. We are all so very human, after all, and so

alike. But, to sum up, it seemed to me that their greatest virtue was their hospitality, and their greatest fault—— Well, before I got out there someone said to me, 'You will never find a colonial who has the same idea of truth as an Englishman has, nor the same standard of honour. They don't mind how they lie, or whether they speak the truth or not. I don't know how it is. Perhaps they've caught the habit from the Kaffirs or the Dutchmen, or perhaps they reckon speaking the truth as a played-out virtue. But, at any rate, there it is.' I am sorry I cannot contradict this statement. No, I will not say sorry, because lying is, after all, the oil which keeps our intercourse with each other running smoothly. I will only state that, as far as my experience goes, the accusation is true—'but they do lie beautifully.'

Perhaps it was not so imperative now for me to earn my own living; if so, I should never have come home. Women's work is as a rule so badly paid in England that I should imagine no one would be silly enough to work there unless she were obliged. Of course, this is all the women's own fault. They have been willing to work as hard as the men for a little pocket-money, and so naturally they have cut their own throats and those of the machine-like men they have managed to rival. But they still go moiling and toiling on (many of them are obliged to do so, poor things!), and, if entirely dependent on their own exertions, can scarcely keep body and soul together, much less lay up any provision for old age or illness. The fact is, there are far too many women in England. The men of the family—or

some of them—in many cases have gone abroad, but the women still remain at home. Why do they not emigrate too? Why do they not seek pastures new? Women are said to be the most conservative of beings, so perhaps that is the reason for their backwardness. But where men have gone before surely women can follow on. There must be at least food to cook or socks to darn, and other household work to be done. The majority of women, though, however badly off they are, and however hard they have to work, still cling to the idea of 'the advantages of England,' as they say. Personally, I never quite understand what advantages England has to offer for people who are at work all day, and have neither time, money, nor strength for anything besides; and then they say they can't leave their home and all their friends. No part of the earth is far away from England now, and through the mail everyone can still be quite near enough home, and as for friends——

A man I know has a chicken-run, and chickens had been born and had died there for generations and generations. At last they throve less and less, and wouldn't succeed, so he gave them up. He said he was going to give the chicken-run a rest, and then try again.

Now, I think friends are rather like that chicken-run. Of course, we are very fond of them, and they are very fond of us, but it is sometimes wise 'to give them a rest.' It's worth while going away to find out after you're gone how nice they are. And when you come back? You must try again, like the man with the chicken-run, that's all.

And if you don't come back? (for they say that if you've once lived in South Africa you never want to live anywhere else). Well, you have for remembrance the glorified vision of the greatest city on earth, and of a country sacred with old traditions, and for the present you are content with easier pay and a healthier life; and if you are a woman you have a statistically better chance of matrimony than if you remained at home, which last is a very practical point when you come to think of it.

Before leaving off, I must just mention the Jubilee, which took place while I was in Queenstown, and I am sure there were no more loyal subjects than ourselves anywhere on that day. Colonials are very loyal, and generally know all about the Royal Family, and some of them thought me quite peculiar to have come all the way from England and not to have seen the Queen. The Jubilee festivities lasted two days, and we had to fight against the most fearful odds. To begin with, it was winter-time and cold. A hurricane blew all the time, and there was a tremendous dust-storm, which smothered everything and everybody. In the daytime there were sports and school-children and volunteers, and in the evening we, womenlike, sat clutching on to our hats trying to watch fireworks that wouldn't come off, while the men wisely went off to the club and drank champagne, and so forgot the elements, and the next day they said that there were men who got drunk who had never got drunk before—if that were possible. Of course, I don't know if that is true or not, but, at any rate, we

had loyal hearts and true, and it was a good Jubilee.

(Before I leave off, I must mention in parenthesis that while I was away I had saved enough money to take me home again. I must say this, because this is the only thing I have done in my whole life that I am proud of—only, after all, a matter of some pounds. But I was pleased about it, because there are two things in this world which are very loathsome. The first is earning money; the second is saving it.)

But I had other money, too, and so I saw about the country a little before I went home. I stayed in Johannesburg, which is the wonder-town of South Africa—fifteen years ago the bare veld, and now a huge town, with mines, stores, and churches, and a large population, reminding one of the old proverb that ill weeds grow apace. I was quite astonished at it all—the mines, the people, the gold, the dust, the women, the carriages, the ugliness, and, quite dazed, one could only stand aside and ask the childish question, 'I wonder where all these people will go to when they die?'

Then I went through Natal, 'the garden of South Africa,' stopping at Maritzburg and Durban—Durban, where one longs to live and die and have one's being! There I took one of the German liners, which are the only boats running from Durban up the east coast home, and we crawled slowly along, stopping at all sorts of out-of-the-way ports, where we signalled our advent by the firing of a gun. Then all the different Consuls would come off, and in the evening there would be a grand beer-drink, and they would sing

the 'Wacht am Rhein' and such patriotic songs until the small hours of the morning, while the passengers who were not of the Fatherland sought their berths as a refuge and tried in vain to sleep. Indeed, it was a triumphant procession through those Portuguese and German ports, until at last we got to Aden, and found that, unfortunately, there were other boats in the world besides our own.

Then we were five days going up the Red Sea, and the firemen struck, and we sat and cooked and longed for death, until at last we got through the Canal, and found the Mediterranean cold, in August, after the Red Sea. We stopped at Naples, which was Europe again after many days, and it seemed in its way quite homelike to us. There we saw many English, and among them we caught sight of the old familiar Cook. Then on we went to Marseilles, where we met him again, and this time he took bodily charge of us and conducted us through France, and landed us safely in London.

London! It was about eight o'clock when we got there; and it was a foggy, dull September morning, all gray—no sun, no sky. The streets were just beginning to wake up; not with the cheerful, busy sound of energetic life, but with the sleepy, lazy yawn that London always puts on, as if it had been making a night of it, before it begins rushing and tearing and bustling again.

And so I was at home! I thought so when I poked my head out of the window and saw around me nothing but gray and dirty buildings, and as the only patch of brightness an advertisement for Nestlé's

Milk. And then when I opened my mouth and gave a gulp—yes, there was no mistaking the taste! I was at home!

I had been gone three years, but everything seemed much the same as when I left. Three years is not long enough to make much difference. The people were the same. I was the same. Looking back, my life during the last three years had been in a way disappointing; there were no thrills, no adventures, no great excitements. Everything had gone on very smoothly, so smoothly, that now it seems as if those days had followed one after the other with the calm evenness of the South African veld itself, and their troubles, almost forgotten, appear as a low range of mountains far away on the distant horizon.

The past stretches away behind us as a garden wherein grows a tangle of flowers and weeds. It is a wise person who leaves the weeds and treasures only the flowers.

THE END

Elliot Stock, 62, *Paternoster Row, London*